

Chapter 1 – Essences of Lily
by rdg2000

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General References:

General Info: [http:// www. hp-lexicon . org /](http://www.hp-lexicon.org/)

Moon Phases: [http:// aa .usno .navy .mil / data/ docs/](http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/)

Latin References: [http:// www. erols .com/ whitaker/](http://www.erols.com/whitaker/) - William Whitaker

Miscellaneous Info: [http:// en . wikipedia . org / wiki / Main_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)

A/N – Just a note. I am writing this story for my own benefit. If there are others wish to read it they may. If you like it great, if not – there are about half a million other stories you can chose from – Please be my guest and find one that you like.

This is a re-write of my first (and only) fan fiction. Though I will try to keep the characters in what I believe would be their cannon's true character – with artistic license, this will be an A/U. As such, expect the following from these characters:

Albus Dumbledore: Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. A powerful 'wise' wizard, who feels he know what is best for all people in general, and for the wizarding world in particular. As such, he is a manipulative old man who has a hard time accepting change, or the fact that he may have been wrong is his decisions.

Minerva McGonagall: Faithful Deputy Headmistress. She has known the Headmaster for the better part of 60 years. Currently, she is the Professor of Transfiguration and head of Gryffindor House. Though she is loyal to Dumbledore, she is a fiercely independent thinker and is not afraid to challenge him on his reasons for pursuing a given course of action.

James Potter: Can trace his genealogy back to three of the four founders of Hogwarts (you guess which three), but none directly – he is not an 'heir' of any of the founders, but he and his family are

committed to the side of 'light' in the wizarding world. Maybe a little too fun loving in school, he was one of the founding members of the 'Marauders' and took great pleasure in pull pranks on the school in general and one Severus Snape in particular.

Lily Evans Potter: Lily comes from a long lost line of Rowena Ravenclaw and would be head of the Ancient house of Ravenclaw – if she were male. She is the first witch in this line in over 500 years. She convinced the sorting hat to put her in Gryffindor since she had some 'bad experiences' with some Ravenclaw students in Diagon Alley when she went to get her supplies. It appears they had some problems with her apparent 'mud-blood' status. She is currently a Charms Mistress in the Department of Mysteries.

Sirius Black: Disowned by his family after being sorted into Gryffindor, Sirius has been close friends with James since his school days. Always one looking for the next prank to pull, the next quidditch match, or the next cute witch to walk past, it is appropriate that his animagus form is that of a dog. Sirius also works as an Auror for the Department of Magical Law Enforcement (DMLE) and is committed to side of the 'light'.

Remus Lupin: Reluctant friend of James and Sirius. He was worried how they would react to his little 'hairy' problem. He was grateful when in their third year his friends did not abandon him when they found out. He was even more grateful when they all became animagi (what ever the plural of animagus is) in their fifth year at Hogwarts. Always the most studious of the Marauders, he tries to keep in touch with his magical roots while finding most of his employment in the Muggle world.

Peter Pettigrew: The most unlikely member of the Marauders – he must have argued his way into Gryffindor from Hufflepuff after meeting the others on the train ride to Hogwarts. He has always been looking for someone bigger and stronger to stand behind. After leaving school he turns to Voldemort since he no longer has the Marauders to stand behind. He has always been jealous of the relationship James and Lily has, and would like nothing better to have Lily for himself.

Frank Longbottom: School mate of James. In his same year – could have been the fifth marauder, but didn't want to work so hard pranking other people, or play quidditch that much. He has known

James as long as he can remember. He is a little upset that Sirius Black has taken his place as James' best friend while at school. He is currently James' partner in the Auror division of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement (DMLE).

Alice Longbottom: Former classmate of Lily Evans. She was also Lily's first friend in the magical world. The wife Frank Longbottom, she currently works in the Department of Mysteries as a clerk.

Aberforth Dumbledore: Mysterious owner / Bar keeper of the Hogshead Inn. Enjoys his anonymity and will take severe steps to keep things as they are.

Sybill Trelawney: Great, great granddaughter of the last true Seer in Great Britain, Cassandra Trelawney. Sybill has very little talents with the 'inner eye'. She has for the most part been living off of the legacy of her name and her family's fortune. However, she now finds herself needing to earn her own keep and is having a difficult time doing so.

Severus Snape: Current Professor of Potions at Hogwarts, Death-eater, and Spy. He is looking out for his own welfare – that is to say he is on his own side. Professor Snape is a bitter man who carries several grudges regarding his heritage, upbringing, treatment at home as well as Hogwarts. He is not one to forgive or forget a 'wrong' done to him, no matter how long ago. His personality is set – there will be very little that can change it. I.E. No redemption for this character.

Draco Malfoy: Poster boy for a 'Death-eater in training'. The only child of Lucius Malfoy and Narcissa Black Malfoy, he has been brought up for want of nothing. He believes everything his father has told him regarding the superiority of 'pure-bloods'. Anything that does not measure up to his preconceived idea of how things should be in the wizarding world is rejected as false. He is past redemption even before he starts school.

Ronald Weasley: As Draco is the poster boy for 'Death-eater in training', Ron is the poster boy for Gryffindor. He rushes into trouble without thinking though he has a good mind for stratagem; he is fiercely loyal to his friends, even though he gets jealous of those that have more than him; hasn't a clue with regards to girls; and has absolutely no tack when it comes to discussing problems with his

friends. Loves to play quidditch, eat, and play pranks on others. Can't understand why it is so important to study.

Hermione Granger: An over-achievers over-achiever. Driven to be the best at anything she does. Does not like to 'not know' everything she comes across. As such, she sometime lacks 'tact' when trying to 'ask' (more like demand) to know about something new that she doesn't know or is contrary to what she has learned from a book or authority figure. Loyal to her friends, she has a hard time when they don't let her into their lives to where she can understand their actions.

Neville Longbottom: Shy, unassuming, painfully bashful do to the way he was raised. Willing to face the unknown for a friend in need, Neville is much stronger and has much more potential then he is aware of. Neville is in need of a friend who will show him how to come out of his shell because when he does; watch out!

Susan Bones: A bit too sure of herself, Susan has a tendency to a little bossy, judgmental and over-bearing. This is mainly due to the fact that she has been raised by her aunt, the current directory of the DMLE – and the only witch in the ministry to be a department head. Susan is a true Hufflepuff, and is intensely loyal to her friends.

The exception of course will be Harry. He will be much smarter and stronger then in the first set of books. This will be how I think the HP stories should have started.

I hope you enjoy this chapter.

Rdg2000.

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Summary: What is 'The power he knows not' and how did Harry get it? How did Harry survive the killing curse and what does Sirius

Black have to do with it? Who is the voice Harry is hearing in his head?

Chapter 1 – The need for a teacher.

Scene – Headmasters office – Hogwarts School of witchcraft and wizardry, First day of Winter Break.

Professor Albus Dumbledore read the report he had just received from the Department of Magical Law Enforcement (DMLE) regarding the unexpected death of one of his teachers – Professor Robert Plum.

The report stated that at 1:15 AM when a DMLE floo operator received a report of suspicious activity at the residence of one of Hogwarts' Professors. Upon arriving at the home, Aurors found a most disturbing sight. There, they found Professor Plum, hanging by a rope, in the Study.

As the Aurors looked through the house, they found a lead pipe in the Hall; a wrench in the Billiards Room; a candlestick in the Conservatory; a knife the Kitchen; and even a muggle fireleg (or was that a firearm? You never could tell with those muggles) in the Ballroom.

Upon further investigation it was determined that all of these items had been used on Professor Plum at some time during the night in the different rooms, but there was not clear sign as to which one provided the fatal blow. Additionally, there were no other magical signatures present in the house than the Professors. If this was the work of Death-eaters, they had covered their tracks very well. For now, the death was being ruled suspicious and the Aurors were working with the local Bobby's to see if there were any muggle gangs active in the area or a group of actors, action out a cult classic just a little too well. Then again, maybe the Death-eaters were using a different scare tactic in this case.

In Professor Dumbledore's opinion, it was a great waste of life.

Professor Dumbledore passed the report on the table for Deputy Headmistress Minerva McGonagall to read; He then slumped down into his chair, took off his glasses, shook his tired, weary head, and

rubbed his eyes with his hands. The whole wizarding world was coming apart at the seams.

The pressure in the wizarding world was unbelievable.

Voldemort and his forces were growing stronger every day.

More and more wizards were either becoming one of his 'Death-eaters' or dying. The wizards that couldn't take the pressure just 'left' the wizarding world altogether either by forsaking their magic and living among the muggles (non-magical folk), or moving on to the next 'great adventure'.

The Ministry of Magic didn't know how to act.

The current minister, Cornelius Fudge, had been a fine minister as long as things were going along smoothly. But now that the self-appointed 'Lord' Voldemort had entered the wizarding world, Minister Fudge didn't know what to do or how to act.

The Ministry had insisted that the death of witches and wizards around Great Britain, and the sign of the 'Dark Mark' over those attacks, were not out of hand; That the self-appointed 'Dark Lord' or He-who-must-not-be-named and his band of 'Death-eaters', were nothing more than a small band of petty criminals that the Aurors were on the verge of catching any time now.

No additional Aurors were being trained and no additional patrols in the wizard communities were made. The only place you saw an increase of Auror activity was at the Ministry of Magic building its self.

At the main entry to the Ministry, two Aurors would greet you. Four more were located in the main floo gate, and four more at the apparition site. In addition to that, each witch or wizard had his or her wand scanned and weighed before entering the building proper. Aurors were located on each floor by the lifts, and again in front of the Ministers office. It was little wonder Voldemort was growing so fast; there weren't enough Aurors left to look for him with the number that were assigned to the Ministry.

But then, that was fine for most of the young Aurors. They knew if they had Ministry duty, they more than likely would not be in the line

of fire of the Death-eaters. They didn't want to fight. They just wanted to get their paycheck and wait for retirement. As long as they were left out of the fight between 'You-know-who' and the Ministry.

"Why couldn't he just come to me?" Albus ask himself. "If Robert felt is life was not worth living, or that he was in danger, I would have made sure he was safe. Even if he wasn't great with a wand, we need every person we can find right now. There is something everyone can do to fight against Voldemort."

Albus was clearly saddened at the loss of his friend and associate.

"Albus, no disrespect, but isn't it a bit early to think of replacing Professor Plum?" asked the deputy headmistress Minerva McGonagall. "I mean you're one third of the way through the school year. Where are you going to find anyone to fill the position of Divination professor on such short notice? Besides, the students' time could be much better used by studying something useful like Charms, or Potions, or heaven forbid Defense Against the Dark Arts."

Dumbledore let a small laugh escape is lips as he looked over his half-moon glasses at the Deputy Headmistress, and friend for over 60 years. Minerva had always had a low opinion of Divination.

Shacking his head sadly, Professor Dumbledore said: "No, Minerva, I have already heard from the School's Board of Directors. Most, if not all of the pure-bloods on the Board insists that the Divination class be continued. I will be sending an advertisement to the Daily Prophet for tomorrow's paper. Anyone who is interested in teaching will have to respond by tomorrow evening, and interviews will be scheduled as soon as possible. I am afraid that I am going to be busy for most of the winter break. I may have to depend on you to get some of the last minute items ready for the remainder of the school year."

"Of course Albus. You can rely on me." Minerva responded.

Scene – Trelawney Manor – what's left of it.

Sybill Trelawney was walking around her family's once grand manor with a half-empty bottle of sherry. She was the great, great granddaughter of the great Cassandra Trelawney – the last true

Seer in Great Britain in 400 years. Sybill had just been very unceremoniously dismissed from her latest private position with the goblins at Gringotts bank.

"How dare they dismiss me like that!" Sybill said to no one in particular. She then sticks out her chin and raises her nose and states: "I am Sybill Trelawney – great, great granddaughter of Cassandra Trelawney. The last of the Trelawney line. I have to have the inner eye. The inner eye is very sensitive. I can't be expected to get every event correct! Don't they know how much time and energy it takes to connect to the inner-eye? But did they give me any time? No! They DEMANDED to know where the treasures were hidden. They DEMANDED to know how it was protected. Then they have the audacity to put a time limit on me and restrict my access to their funding. 'Time is money' they said. Those bloody goblins got just what they deserved."

"But what am I going to do? Look at this place! I didn't expect the goblins to take so much of my family's Heirlooms as payment for those goblins that were injured. They took everything of value! The once great house of Trelawney is near ruin. What am I to do? Oh, what am I to do?" Walking up the stairs with a half bottle of Sherry, she was determined to drown her sorrows. Sybill Trelawney was at the end of her rope.

The next morning, as the light entered her bedroom window, Sybill shielded her blood-shot eyes as she sees her faithful owl, Cassandra, fly through the window with a copy of the Daily Prophet.

"What do you have there Cassy? Where did you find that? You know I can't afford a copy of the Prophet."

Grateful that Cassy had brought her the paper, Sybill decides to see what is going on in the wizarding world.

IMMEDIATE OPENING AT HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF
WITCHCRAFT
AND WIZARDRY FOR A DIVINATION INSTRUCTOR

Due to the sudden demise of the previous Professor of Divination, Professor Robert Plum, Headmaster Albus Dumbledore and the School's Board of Directors are announcing an immediate opening

for the position of Professor of Divination at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry.

Interested applicants must notify Professor Albus Dumbledore no later than this evening to schedule an interview. Please indicate the time and place you would like to meet Professor Dumbledore in your correspondence. It is your responsibility to select a site.

Employment will begin after the winter break.

Sybill could not believe her good fortune. This was the perfect job for her. Who else could possibly be better qualified than she? After all, she was the great, great granddaughter of Cassandra Trelawney, that family name by its self should almost guarantee her the position.

"Oh, Cassy! Didn't I tell you something good would come out of that experience with the goblins"? Sybill stated excitedly.

If Cassy could have, she would have just rolled her eyes, shrugged her shoulders, and said: "What ever."

"Oh, I must get word to my old friend Albus at once to let him know that I am interested in the position. But I must not seem too eager, or he might think that I am desperate for the job" ('which I am, completely').

'Hum,' she thought to herself, 'I'd better get a response written right away or I might miss it all together. I'll tell Albus that I am currently detained, but that I will meet with him two days prior to the end of the break at the Hog's Head. I hope Aberforth is understanding of my situation, and will let me rent a room for a minimal price'.

Sybill quickly fashioned a letter to Professor Dumbledore expressing her interest in the position. After sealing the letter, she turned to her owl Cassy and said: "Now Cassy, I don't want you to deliver this letter right away. I want you to wait until the Headmaster is through with his evening meal. Make it look like you've traveled a great distance in a short period of time to get the letter to him. Then, if you would like, you can say in the Owlery overnight and wait for his reply. In the mean time, I need to give Aberforth a floo-call to see how he is – for old time's sake of course."

'Of course.' Thought Cassy.

Scene – Hogwarts main hall – Dinnertime.

"Well, Albus." Professor McGonagall started as she entered into the main hall by the staff's table, "How many frauds have applied for the position so far?"

"Now Minerva," Dumbledore chided, his eyes twinkling brightly, "I have received responses from three fine candidates. And I predict that I will receive one more before the night is out."

"Oh, are you going into fortune telling too Albus?" Minerva asked with her eyebrows raised.

Professor Dumbledore laughed. "Of course not, Minerva. It is just that there has been an owl in the rafters of the main hall since early this morning, it seems to be trying to hide from me for some reason, and won't come down for some reason."

"Well, let's just leave it up there and enjoy our dinner."

"Well enough Minerva." Albus replied.

After dinner, as soon as the pair of teacher stood to leave the room, the mysterious owl came flying down from the rafters and lit in front of the Headmaster. With a tired 'Hoot', she presented the message attached to her leg from her master.

"Albus, who is it from?" Professor McGonagall asked.

After reading the letter, the Headmaster let out a small laugh, looked at the owl, and said, "Cassandra, of course you can use the Owlery to rest and recover. I will have a reply for your master first thing in the morning."

If owls could blush, you would have sworn that that is what Cassandra was doing right now. With a quiet 'Hoot' and a slight bow of the head, she flew off to join the other owls in the Owlery.

"Cassandra?" Minerva asked quietly to herself. As the light of recognition came into her eyes she turned to Albus and said, "Albus, you can't be serious! Sybill Trelawney as a Hogwarts Professor! The founders would be spinning in their graves!"

For his part Professor Dumbledore just smiled, the twinkle in his eyes working overtime. How he enjoyed watching his Deputy Headmistress getting all worked up over nothing. Well, maybe not nothing. Oh, that wonderful Irish temper of hers.

"Albus, you must remember how she was when she was a student here. As I recall, she barely made it through her classes! She was always predicting someone's death, and those glasses! Please don't get me started on those glasses!"

"Calm yourself Minerva." Albus said raising his hand to calm his barely in control deputy. "You know I have to give everyone a fair chance at the position. Miss Trelawney will be treated the same as all the other candidates. There is only a 25 percent chance that she will make it through the interview process anyway."

"Of course, you are correct Albus." Minerva said most of the panic had left her voice by now.

"Come. Let's go up to my office and review all of the potential Divination candidates we haven't much time."

Scene – Headmasters office – two days prior to the end of winter break

A weary Headmaster and his Deputy were going over the results of the first three candidates. To say the least, things were not looking promising.

One candidate had been a witch that had gone into the muggle community and had set up fortune teller telemarketing service. She was currently under investigation by the muggle government and was looking for someplace to hide.

The next candidate had no real inclination for Divination, but did seem to be a bit too excited to so close to so many young children. Albus ask the Aurors to keep a close eye on this one. Within a week he was in prison.

Even though Albus couldn't prove it in court, the third candidate was nothing less then a Voldemort sympathizer looking for a way to get a

foothold in Hogwarts. He wasn't marked, but Albus could tell whom he followed.

"Albus, this don't look very promising. But I beg you, not Sybill! Take Monika! At least she has experience in the 'art' of putting on a good Divination show." Minerva stated pleadingly.

"No Minerva." Albus answered. "Miss Wardley has broken the law, and I will not be a party to her escaping justice. I have just a few minutes before I am to meet with Miss Trelawney at the Hog's Head. Do you have any more questions you would like me to go over with her while I am there?"

"The Hog's Head! That certainly is a fine reputable establishment if every there was one – nothing against Aberforth of course." Minerva said. She still couldn't get over what Aberforth had done to that poor goat.

"Of course," came Albus' reply.

Scene – The Hog's Head tavern in Hogsmeade.

The Hog's Head tavern had a reputation of attracting an 'interesting' sort of clientele. It seemed that every table was in a dark corner where shady deal could be negotiated and questionable packages exchanged. Then there was that bar keeper / owner of the bar.

Aberforth Dumbledore was an enigma in the wizarding world. Most people didn't know where he was, and fewer know that he was bar tender at The Hog's Head. The people at the tavern just saw a large elderly wizard with a dirty rag in one hand cleaning an equally dirty glass in the other hand. He didn't ask questions, and as long as you left the other patrons alone, and ordered more fire-whiskey, he would leave you alone.

Aberforth had been contacted by Sybill Trelawney to 'reserve' a back room in his establishment for a meeting – a 'job interview' she had called it between herself and his brother Albus.

"Aberforth? Do you think I could get another decanter of sherry before Albus shows up?" Sybill asked with a bit of trembling in voice. She was trying to hide her fear and apprehension about talking to the one wizard many considered the most powerful in the world.

Aberforth wiped out his wand and silently obliviated every other patron in the bar so that they would not remember his name.

"For the last time Miss Trelawney, I'm the 'bar-keep'. Don't use my name. There is a reason why I'm here and not in Diagon Alley. Now take your drink and head back to the meeting room. Albus will be here soon enough, and you don't want to be too 'relaxed' when he gets here." Aberforth said crossly.

Felling a little bit smug, Sybill accepts the drink and heads back to her meeting room to wait for the Headmaster.

In one of the many dark corners of The Hog's Head a rookie Death-eater named Severus Snape becomes aware of the conversation up at the bar. Due to his many years of training in the art of shielding his mind through the uses of Occlumency, the silent obliviate spell cast by Aberforth was not as effective on him as Aberforth would have wanted and so Severus was unaffected by it. He then heard the rest of the conversation regarding Albus Dumbledore is leaving the confines of Hogwarts and coming to meet with someone named 'Miss Trelawney'. Could this be some one related to the great Seer Cassandra Trelawney? If they were, then this was most definitely in responses to the Divination position? He knew that his 'Master' would be interested in any news he could obtain from this meeting since it appeared that their candidate had not been selected.

Carefully Severus kept an eye on the floo and the front door, not sure which one the esteemed Headmaster would use.

Promptly at 8:00 PM the front door opened and the tall, old, but powerful wizard stepped into the tavern from the cold, wet night. He nodded to the bar keeper, and headed back to the room to meet with Miss Trelawney.

Severus was still sitting in his dark table, thinking how this may be important to his Master, and how it could help him move up in the ranks of the Death-eaters. He decides to wait for a few minutes, and then order another fire-whiskey. After the bar tender has delivered his drink, he will silently sneak over to the door of the meeting room and see what he can hear.

After about twenty minutes, Severus decided to put his plan to the test. He called over to the 'bar-keep' for another fire-whiskey and waited for it to be delivered. After he had paid for his drink, Severus waited for the old wizard to turn his back and then made his move. He made it back to the door to the meeting room just in time to hear: 'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...' –

"HEY, YOU BACK THERE, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?" The old bar-keeper, yelled out. Severus had been found out and had to get out of there quickly. Seeing the back wall, he took out his wand, and cast a powerful reducto curse, effectively made a rear entrance to the establishment. He had information that was vital to his Lord, and he could not be detained, as soon as he was away from the tavern he apparated to his new Master.

Scene – In the Meeting room with Professor Dumbledore and Miss Trelawney

Professor Dumbledore was extremely depressed. It was quite clear as the meeting went on the Miss Trelawney did not have the gift of Sight as her great, great grandmother had had. In fact, most of the time, instead of explaining her training in Divination, Miss Trelawney had repeatedly made reference to her ancestor, and how since she was the last of the line, she just had to have all the same gifts that they had had.

Professor Dumbledore was just in the process of thanking Miss Trelawney for her time, and telling her that he thought it was best if he leave, when, all of a sudden, he felt a strange aura of magic coming off of the young mystic. He observed that she became very rigid. That her eye's behind those huge magnifying lenses called glasses rolled to the top of her head to where only the whites of the eyes were showing.

Her breathing became rough, deep and uneven. Professor Dumbledore was beginning to get worried for Miss Trelawney. He got up, out of his chair and went over to see if he could help her. When he touched her arm, he was somewhat surprised to find that it was as ridged, and hard as a steel beam.

She raised her head slightly as if addressing the ceiling. Then, suddenly, talked in a voice – not her own – but one that was deep, as if powered by magic it's self:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ... And the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ... And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ... The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies...

The magic in the room slowly returned to normal. Miss Trelawney's form and figure returned to normal once more and she closed her eyes and sat back peacefully into her chair.

Professor Dumbledore was so shocked, he poured himself a glass of sherry and drank it quickly, then returned his gaze to his interviewee.

Was this a true prophecy?

Was there really one who could vanquish the Dark Lord?

Who could it be?

Dumbledore knew that he had to take the prophecy seriously. But there were so many questions. He knew that he could not let Sybill Trelawney out of his sight. She may not be all he had hoped she would be, but she did show that she did have some of her great, great grandmother's gift. He could not afford to loss her, or let Voldemort get his hands on her. Voldemort MUST NOT LEARN of the prophecy.

Dumbledore was brought out of his thinking as Miss Trelawney started to stir. "Oh, my, oh, I don't know what came over me! Now you were about to say something Professor, weren't you?" She asked with some amount of pleading in her voice.

Professor Dumbledore took a few moments to settle him self down as well. It is not every day that you are present when real prophecy is pronounced. His many years of Occlumency had schooled him in how to hide his true feelings behind a kind and pleasant mask. On

the inside, his emotions were jumping up and down, but he knew he had to present his calm exterior to Miss Trelawney. To hear her talk, she didn't remember going into her trance, or the contents of the prophecy.

Professor Dumbledore smiled kindly at Miss Trelawney, his eyes twinkling slightly. "Yes Miss Trelawney, I was about to say that it would be a pleasure to have someone of your skill and talent teach at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. You do realize that you have only a few days before the next term starts don't you?"

Sybill could hardly contain herself. She had done it! All by her self! She was going to be a teacher at the most prestigious school of magic in Britain!

"Yes Professor Dumbledore!" She answered enthusiastically, "I can be at Hogwarts by tomorrow!"

"That is very good." Professor Dumbledore answered back very smoothly. "However, I feel that due to the shortness of time, perhaps it would be best if you came up to the castle this evening. That way we can get you settled into your quarters and you can begin to fix up your classroom, as you would like. I could have a house elf return to your manor to collect your things and return them to you."

Miss Trelawney was as giddy as a new schoolgirl with the possibility of going to the castle this evening. "Why yes, that would be acceptable." She stated as calmly as she could. With that she started gathering her things up.

Professor Dumbledore took this moment to excuse himself from the room so that he could too settle down a bit.

As he entered the hallway, Albus felt the cold breeze coming in from outside.

"Aberforth, what happened here? How did you come to acquire a new rear entrance to your tavern?" He asked his brother.

"Oh, not much. One of my 'patrons' decided to try to listen in on your conversation with ol' Sybill back there."

Albus started to worry, but of course, he wouldn't let it show. "Oh and how long ago was that." Dumbledore ask calmly. "Do you happen to know who it was?"

"It was maybe 5, 10 minutes ago. He couldn't have been at the door for more then 10 or 20 seconds. I think it may have been young Mr. Snape. You know the one – brilliant at potions, but totally lacking in any human skill, looks like he forgets to wash his hair, and has a huge chip on his shoulder. Ah, Albus, I was thinking of keeping this as a back door. Do you think you could do the transfiguration – and while you're at it, put a strengthening charm on it so that this couldn't happen again?"

"But of course brother."

With a few waves of his wand, Dumbledore had completed the task, but now he was really starting to worry. 'Could he have heard the prophecy, all or part of it? I must find Mr. Snape and see how he is doing.' Albus thought.

"Well Aberforth, I must be on my way. I'm taking the new Divination professor up to the castle tonight."

"What! You mean your actually hiring that fraud!" Aberforth almost shouted. "Albus, are you feeling well?" He asked as he placed his hand on his brother's shoulder.

Albus laughed, "Yes brother, I'm fine."

Just then Professor Trelawney came out of the room. It was clear that she had finished up the rest of the sherry.

"Well, I guess congratulations are in order for you Professor Trelawney." Aberforth said with a slight sneer in his voice.

"Well, thank you Aberforth. I shall endeavor to enlighten the upcoming generation to the art of Divination as best I ca.. can." Professor Trelawney said with a slight slur in her speech.

"Come now Professor, we need to get up to the castle as quickly as possible." Professor Dumbledore said. "Aberforth, could we use your floo by chance?"

"Of course Albus"

Scene – Lord Voldemort's Headquarters outside Little Hangleton – Riddle Manor

Severus Snape apparated as close as he could to his Master's headquarters. He was hoping that his Master would be here tonight and that he would be in a 'good' mood. He told one of the guards standing outside Voldemort's inner chamber to go and announce him quickly as he had important news.

Grumbling, the guard went in, and shortly there after came back to admit Severus in to the inner chamber with a slight smirk on his face.

Hurrying in, Severus nervously rushed over before Voldemort, knelt before him, and kissed the hem of his robe. "My Lord." He stated.

"So Severus," Voldemort said. "What gives you the privilege to think you can come in here and demand an audience with me? You obviously have yet to learn your place. CRUCIO!" The pain of a thousand hot knives tore through his body for several minutes.

After Voldemort released him from the spell, Severus again ask himself the question 'Why?' Why had he put in his lot with Voldemort? Yes, he felt that that he had been slighted by other 'light' wizards, Dumbledore, Potter, Sirius Black, even Lily Evens – now Potter – had belittled him by ignoring his advances, despite their childhood together.

The wizarding world needed to be made stronger, more powerful. It had to resist the corruption that would influence it from the muggle world. Those filthy muggles and mudblood would have to learn to bow before their true masters. But was this the best way? Voldemort had promised great power and riches, and yes, some of the spells and training the he had received from Voldemort and his inner circle had indeed made his stronger, but where were the riches? It was not his place to question Voldemort on this point. The riches would come. It was just a matter of time.

"Well Snape!" Voldemort hissed out, "What is so important that you feel you must come to tell me now and interrupt my time in my sanctuary?"

Severus stood up as straight and proudly as he could. Bowing his head, he said: "Forgive me my Lord. I come with news regarding Dumbledore, the Divination position, and a possible prophecy pronounced this very night regarding yourself and another."

Voldemort leaned forward in his throne. "Speak," he said, "What did you hear?"

"I was at the Hog's Head observing the people and seeing if there were others who would be worthy to join your ranks, when a Miss. Sybill Trelawney approached the bartender and inquired if her room were ready for her meeting with Professor Dumbledore. She had used the bartender's name 'Aberforth', in addressing him. The bartender then took out his wand and cast a wordless 'Obliviate' spell. If not for my Occlumency shield, my mind would have been affected as well."

"Yes, yes, hooray for you and your skills Snape. Now get to the point before I lose my patience!" Voldemort screamed.

Severus cringed before his Master, but held a brave face and continued his tell. "Yes, my Lord." He said.

"At precisely 8:00 o'clock, Professor Dumbledore came in the tavern, and headed straight back to the meeting room. I devised a plan where by I could position myself out side their door to hear what was going on.

"When I got there, I heard Miss Trelawney start to state a prophecy:

'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ...
Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...'

"I was, unfortunately found out by the bar keeper at this time, and forced to flee. I assumed that Dumbledore would have given Miss Trelawney the position of professor of Divination, since it appears that our candidates had failed. Since this prophecy obviously dealt with you, I thought you should know about it at once." Severus bowed his head again, indicating that this was the end of his report.

"That's it?" Voldemort ask. "For this you run in here and DEMAND an audience with me, an incomplete prophecy and supposition as to

the Hogwarts teacher of Divination? CRUCIO!" This time Voldemort held the curse on him for much longer.

"Now, get out of my sight! And send Macnair in here at once!" Voldemort commanded.

Severus struggled to stand, and bowing, backed out from Voldemort's chamber, found Macnair, Voldemort's current right-hand-man, and sent him in to his Master. Then he went to one of the many 'troop' rooms to get himself cleaned up and to recover from the Cruciatus curse.

Macnair walked in to his Master's chambers confidently. As he approached Voldemort, he bowed, and kissed the hem of his robe. "My Lord," he said. "I come to serve." And with that took a step back and waited for his Lord to speak.

Voldemort leaned over and scratched his familiar, Nagini, on the top of the head. After a moment he let out a low laugh; "Ah, Walden, it is so good to have some new young 'talent' here that is so willing to please their Lord."

"Yes, my Lord." Walden Macnair stated casually. You did not want to take anything for granted when in the presence of the Dark Lord.

"Young Severus has indeed provided several pieces of useful information tonight. Some of which we must act on tonight!"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Macnair, I want you to ready two teams. One team of two or three people will go back to the Hog's Head and see if they can confirm the identity of the bartender, and see why Albus Dumbledore was there. But be very careful. If it is Aberforth Dumbledore, you will not want to get in a fight with him. He will not hold back as his brother would, and I hear some of his transformations can be quite 'interesting'.

"The second team will be a strike force. You are to go directly to Trelawney Manor and bring all occupants here, along with anything else that may be of worth. If they provide any resistance, kill them. Raise the Manor when you are through, but I want Miss Trelawney brought back here. Is that understood?

"Yes my Lord, I shall not fail you." Macnair answered solemnly.

"Make sure you do not." Voldemort replied.

Scene – Headmasters office, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Professor McGonagall was sitting at a work desk off to the side of the Headmaster's main area when she heard the floo start up. Looking up she saw the Headmaster step confidently out of the fire and in to the room. Then, much to her surprise, he seemed to stop as if waiting to help someone else out of the floo. Sure enough, as soon as the Headmaster had turned around, Sybill Trelawney came stumbling out of the fireplace, falling into the Headmaster arms.

"Albus?" Professor McGonagall asked. "Would you mind telling me what is going on?"

"Ah Minerva, I'm glad to see you're still up. I would like to introduce you to our newest Professor of Divination, Professor Sybill Trelawney." Professor Trelawney looked around the room for a few seconds trying to get her bearing. When she finally saw Professor McGonagall, she cracked a smile, and stumbled over to her with her hand extended.

"Oh Minerv... Minerva, it is so good to see you again. I predict many wonderful adventures in the yea... years to come."

For her part, Professor McGonagall just stood there with a look of disgust on her face but Professor Trelawney was too far-gone to notice.

"Albus, what is the meaning of this? Do you intend to put the fate of the students in the hands of this... this rummy?"

"Now Minerva, there are reasons why I brought Professor Trelawney here directly from her job interview. I am not at liberty to discuss right now, but it is vitally important that she be kept safe and away from ... darker influences."

"Excuse me, Sybill, would it be possible for one of our house elves to go and gather your things from Trelawney Manor?" Dumbledore asked smoothly.

For her part, Sybill Trelawney just looked around until she found where the voice was coming from and nodded, "Why, yes of course Headmaster. Oh, but I'm `fraid the goblins got most of it already."

"That's fine Sybill we will get what we can find. Duncan!" The Headmaster called.

With a small pop a very stately and proper looking house elf popped into the Headmasters Office.

"Yous called Duncan sir?" he asked.

"Yes Duncan. Miss Trelawney has given us permission to go to Trelawney Manor and bring EVERYTHING here. This MUST be done as quickly as possible." The Headmaster stated looking over his half-moon glasses.

Duncan looked between the Headmaster and Miss Trelawney a few times and then stated, "I's understanding sir. I's is getting some other elves to help me move her things here. Does you expect there to be any 'troubles' sir?" Duncan asked.

"I think there may be others who would want to take whatever they find there."

"I's understanding sir. It shall be done." And with that Duncan popped out of the room.

"Minerva, would you be so kind as to show Sybill where her quarters will be? Thank you."

"You better be here when I get back Albus. You have some questions to answer." Minerva huffed as she gathered Sybill by the arm and headed out the door.

As soon as Minerva left the room, Albus rose very slowly from his chair, and walked over to the cupboard that held his Pensive. He had many things he wished to review tonight, not the least of which was the prophecy.

'Could it be true? Could there really be someone capable of destroying that monster? What does it mean 'Born as the seventh month dies?' Are we to look for a baby? Surely not! How could a baby destroy such an evil as Voldemort? There must be another answer.'

Albus was deep in thought as Professor McGonagall returned. "Alright Albus, spill it... What is going..." Minerva stopped talking as she saw the look of deep concern on the aged mage's face. She could tell that whatever he was thinking about, it had grave consequences.

"Albus, what is it?" She asked quietly.

"Minerva I wish I knew what to do." Albus began. "I was all ready to dismiss her; in fact, I think I was starting to dismiss her, when all of a sudden she went into a trance. This was not a fake trance, this was the real thing. The hair on the back of my neck was standing up due to the amount of magic that was in the room."

Albus looked up at his Deputy Headmistress, "She stated a prophecy Minerva. A real live, honest to goodness prophecy just like Cassandra use to do. It was amazing." The Headmaster shook his head in disbelief. "I am not at liberty to tell you the prophecy at this time. I wish I could, but I must go to the Department of Mysteries and have the prophecy duplicated and stored. Then, I can start looking for the person to fulfill the prophecy. I will give you this much though Minerva; This prophecy gives me hope that all is not lost; That Voldemort will fall; and that we will get out of this mess."

Later that evening at Hogwarts

Duncan and the other house elves had just returned from Trelawney Manor. They had put everything in Sybill's room. Duncan thought it best if he were to tell the headmaster what had happened that night when they got there.

"Yes, Duncan" Professor Dumbledore started, "Did everything go well this evening?"

"Duncan is sorry sir, but everything did not go well this night." Duncan started.

"As we's is getting to the Manor tonight, a group of dark wizards showed up and started to destroy everything. We's had already gotten all of Ms. Trelawney's things from her house, and her owl, Cassandra, when they showed up and were just ready to leave."

"When Ms. Trelawney's owl saw the dark wizards destroying everything, she escaped, and attacked the leader of the group."

"Ms. Trelawney's owl was a brave and loyal friend to Ms. Trelawney, and was trying to stop them from destroying her home. She clawed and bit the lead of the group to where he was forced to drop his wand. The others in the group could not get a clear shot at Cassandra as she was too clever to expose herself to them. However, it seems as if the leader of the group is not only carrying a wand for a weapon. Duncan saw him reach into his robe and take out a small item that grew into what looked like a reaper scythe. The leader of the group seemed very comfortable with the scythe, and when Cassandra attacked again, he struck her with it killing her instantly. I is sorry Master Dumbledore, Duncan be trying to get everything here, but Ms. Trelawney's owl felt a need to try to protect her mistress home."

"You did well Duncan." Professor Dumbledore replied sadly. "Cassandra was willing to lay down her life protecting her mistress' home and property. You can ask for no greater show of love then that. I will inform Professor Trelawney in the morning of her loss."

After Duncan left, Professor Dumbledore's expression darkened again. 'So Voldemort does know of the prophecy – at least part of it – and who spoke it. I wonder how much young Severus heard? I must try to talk to the young man quickly so as to limit the damage that could be done.'

'Why would Severus gone Voldemort? I know he was a Slytherin, but that doesn't automatically make you a Death-eater. Now more then ever I HAVE to find Severus Snape!'

End of Chapter 1

AN – This is about the fifth time re-writing this and I am still not satisfied. I hope those who read this before find it a little better. 22-Sep-2008

rdgale

Chapter 2 – Some good News, Some bad
Scene – Vernon and Petunia Dursley's Home

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE PREGNANT?" Vernon's face was currently shifting through different shades of purple when Petunia gave him the 'good' news.

Petunia was shacking and took a step back when she heard how Vernon was reacting to the announcement. They had talked about starting a family, but Vernon seemed to be more interested in lying, cheating, and bribing his way up to a better position.

Petunia loved Vernon with all her heart and was willing to look past his 'minor' faults and do everything in her power to keep him. This was one of the reasons she used to convince herself that it was time to start a family. If Vernon had someone other than her that relied on him, then maybe he would start to settle down.

"DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH MORE DIFFICULT IT WILL BE FOR ME TO MOVE TO A NEW JOB NOW?" Vernon had been at Grunnings drill manufacturer for several years now, and was looking at transferring to a competitor's firm so he could get a 'bonus' for bringing his customers with him.

With their recent move to number 4 Privet drive and now news of Petunia's pregnancy, Vernon was stuck. "Well that's a fine kettle of fish now isn't it?"

"But... but snookums, you know we talked about starting a family soon." Petunia stated. "I just thought this would be a good time. Besides, look at all those people in upper management. Most of them have one or two children. It's a sign of maturity. I was thinking how, if our little bundle of joy could arrive before the summer picnic, that your managers would see that you are ready for more responsibility – starting a family and all."

"Oh, hum... yes... that would be a good thing now wouldn't it." The gears were slowly turning in Vernon's head. "Yes, this just might work... I mean, look at Jenkins, he's probably the next one up for promotion – time wise I mean. But he's still single. Spending all those hours chasing down lead and what not. He's the one I have to bump off to get the next management slot that comes up. And there's talk the Smythe is thinking of having his retirement party

sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Yes, this just might work out. Oh, Petunia, I'm so happy for you! Now, all I have to do is let all the key people know at work so that I can start paving my way up to the corner office. Yes, thank you very much Petunia."

Scene – St. Mungo's Hospital waiting room – Late January 1980.

"Alice, what are you doing here?" Lily asked.

"Probable the same thing you are. I haven't been feeling very well lately, and thought I better come and get checked out." Alice answered.

Just then two medi-witches stepped out and called for Lily Potter and Alice Longbottom.

45 minutes later the two witches again appeared in the waiting room with huge smiles on their faces.

"Well?" Lily asked.

"Yep!" Alice answers. "You?"

"The same!"

The two young witches embrace each other joyfully. They can't get over how their lives mirror the other ones.

Both married to newly commissioned Aurors; both working in the Department of Mysteries, Lily as a Charm's Mistress and creator, and Alice working in administration; and now, both expecting!

"I just can't believe it! First, Petunia announces that she is expecting, and then me! It is good to know that the Evans line will be continuing."

"Petunia?" Oh ya, that's your muggle sister isn't it?"

"Yes. I'm still sorry we don't get along better, but she and my parents all the family I have left. I just wish her husband were a bit more opened minded."

"Well, don't worry about him right now. Things will work out one way or the other."

"When are you due?" Alice asks.

"Late July, or the first of August. How about you?"

"My medi-witch told me pretty much the same thing. You've got to stop copying me Lily!" They both laugh.

"How are you going to tell James?"

"Oh, I think I get out the fine china, candle lights, soft music – pull out all the stops. He's sure to think he has forgotten another important date. Why don't you and Frank floo over at about 8:30 PM and we can celebrate together?"

"Sounds great! Did they tell you if it was a boy or a girl?"

"It's a boy - Harry James Potter. It's a family tradition that the father's name be used as a middle name, but we've been talking about what we would call our son for a long time. How about you? Boy or girl?"

"It's a boy also – Neville Franklin Longbottom. Same thing with the father's name, but I don't mind, I have the feeling my son will be a lot like his father."

"I'm hoping Harry will be a little more like me, and not so much like James. I don't know if I could handle another Marauder in the house!"

After a few more minutes of small talk, and dreaming, Lily and Alice headed back home to get ready to tell their husband's the good news.

Scene – James and Lily Potter's home later that evening

James Harold Potter had just flooed home after a hard days work as an Auror. He and his partner Frank Longbottom were some of the few Aurors who were actually 'in-the-field' trying to capture and subdue Lord Voldemort and his Death-eaters.

Voldemort's forces were getting stronger every day. Attacks were becoming more frequent, and also more deadly. It didn't seem to

matter who you were; once you had spoken out against Voldemort – or refused his 'gracious' offer to join him – you were as good as dead.

Frank and James had been lucky so far. They had had a modicum of success in stemming the Death-eater raids from time to time, and had even been lucky enough to escape serious injury when Voldemort himself showed up at the raids.

Today had just been frustrating to James. There had been rumors of another 'recruitment' meeting in South London, but nothing came of it. James and Frank spent the whole day chasing petty thieves and merchants dealing illegal items all over the countryside with little to show for it.

'Man, am I beat.' James thought to himself.

Almost immediately after coming out of the fireplace, James froze. Something definitely is not right. The house is cleaned and orderly; the lights are soft and dimmed; there is soft music coming from the Wizards Wireless Network (WWN); and there is a hint of perfume in the air.

'Oh no, what have I forgotten this time?' James thought. 'It's not our wedding anniversary. It's not Lily's birthday (I think). Didn't we just have Christmas? Or was that last year? Boy, I'm working way too hard – I don't even know what day of the week it is. I better come up with something quick before Lily kills me. Okay, let's think. Candy and flowers are always good.'

Quick as a flash, James headed back out in the floo to Honeydukes for a box of their finest chocolates and then next door for an arrangement of pale pink Day Lily's and Angles Breath (like Baby's Breath, but with small pixies flying around – changing color to match the mood), and heads back to floo home like nothing happened.

"Lily, I'm home!" James announces as he comes back through the floo, brushing the ash off his cloak and gifts.

"I'm in the kitchen, dear," came Lily's reply. "Didn't I hear you come in a minute ago dear?" she asks sweetly.

"Ah, no, that wasn't me. It must have been one of the house elves getting things ready for tonight."

'Oh James, you are such a fibber. You know house elves don't make any noise doing housework'. Lily thought.

"Mmm, that smells delicious. And I have the perfect center piece, and desert," as James brings the chocolates and flowers out from behind his back.

"Oh, James, that's so sweet of you, how thoughtful." Lily was going to play this up for all it was worth.

"Oh ya. Can't forget a day like today now can we?"

"Come on, let's eat quickly, Frank and Alice are coming over later this evening."

James and Lily had a lovely dinner, making small talk and enjoying one another's company. James did notice a small wrapped present next to Lily's plate. He wondered what the gift was about, and started to worry that he should have gotten a small gift for Lily also.

Thinking quickly, James conjured a bright orange Tiger Lily with a pretty pink bow around the stem and placed it in a conjured box underneath his chair. He would give it to Lily after the meal.

James still didn't know what the special occasion was, but he felt confident that he was doing a masterful job of not letting it show.

At 8:30 PM, Frank's head popped up in the floor. "Hey, you two love birds, mind if we come through?"

"No problem, come on in, we're just finishing with dinner". James answered back. James and Lily both walked out of the dining room into the front room carrying their gifts. "I was about to give Lily her present anyway."

Frank and Alice Longbottom, some of James' oldest friends, came through the fireplace holding each other like they were newlyweds again, with the biggest smiles on their faces. James knew something was up.

"Hey what is up with you two? If I didn't know better I'd say Frank just popped the question to you and you said 'yes'?"

"What do you mean 'what's up'?" Frank replied, "I can't believe you are being so calm about the whole situation".

"Did I miss something? Lily and I were just sitting back having a special dinner". James was getting confused.

"Yes James. But did you ever think about what we were celebrating?" Lily asked.

James blushed. How was he going to get out of this mess?

"Well, ya, ah - you know. It's that one special day – ah – you talked about it last month – ah you know – St. Swithum's day or something."

Lily looked heartbroken. Frank and Alice were having a hard time keeping a straight face. They had just figured out that Lily was getting some long over-due payback on one of the original Marauders.

"Oh! James! How could you be so cruel?" Lily looked like she was ready to run off and cry.

Moving quickly, James came to her side and tried to sooth his upset wife.

"Honestly honey, if I had remembered today, I swear, I would have been better prepared. I promise I'll never forget this day again.... Just one thing, what is so special about today?"

"WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT TODAY? WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT TODAY! JAMES HAROLD POTTER I HAVE NEVER BEEN SO DISAPPOINTED IN MY LIFE! HOW COULD YOU FORGET THE DAY I CAME HOME AND TOLD YOU THAT YOU WERE GOING TO BE A FATHER!"

Frank let a little smirk slip out. Alice had tears rolling down her checks, stomping her feet on the floor, trying not to laugh, and was holding on to Frank's hand so hard that it was starting to be painful.

James, for his part, was just looking at Lily and blinked, mouth held open, but no noise coming out. After a few moments, his brain finally kicked into gear as he started to comprehend what his wife had just told him.

Slowly, a crooked smile broke across James' face and a fire lit in his eyes as he looked at Lily. "I'm going to be a Father?" he asked.

Lily brought out the little gift – handing it to James and replied: "Yes James, you're going to be a Father."

James opened up the small gift and found small quidditch broom and a miniature golden snitch.

Frank and Alice dissolved into laughter.

"You've got the first position filled on your own personal quidditch team." Frank stated after getting himself under control.

"Lily, are you trying to get my first born to be a seeker? By the way, do we know if it is a boy or a girl?"

"It's a boy James, so who knows, maybe little Harry will want to be a seeker just to show up his old man" Lily stated.

"Harry James Potter." James stated dreamily. "Hey! What was that comment about showing up his old man? I was a pretty good chaser in my day, and if things were different, I could have played professional ya know?"

"Ya, I hear the Cannon's are always on the look out for a decent reserve chaser." Frank teased.

Just then the fireplace flared again, and a tall, dark haired young man looking every part the aristocrat stepped out, followed closely by a thin – premature gray haired gentleman, and a smaller, more rotund, looking man – truth be told, he looked more like a large rodent.

Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, and Peter Pettigrew had been James' friends since his days at Hogwarts. Together, they were secretly known as the Marauders: the bane of the house of Slytherin, and the providers of laughter and mirth to the rest of the school.

"Hey, James, did you forget about tonight? Oh, sorry Frank, Alice, didn't see you there for a moment. Boy, look at you guys. If I didn't know better, I'd have to say both of you have some news to spill."

Lily and Alice just smiled sweetly and let James and Frank tell the rest of the Marauders the good news. Needless to say, James, at least, was going to be on the end of countless pranks and jokes for the next seven months or so.

After a few moments, Peter spoke up; "So, when is the blessed event going to happen?"

"Last part of July or the first part of August as best as the Mediwitches can tell. They'll be able to narrow it down a bit more when things are further along." Alice answered.

"Ju.. July or August?" Peter stutters.

Unknown to the other Marauders, Peter had become a Death-eater shortly after leaving Hogwarts. This way he could tell Lord Voldemort what The Order of the Phoenix was doing, who they were keeping an eye on, or who they were suspicious of being a Death-eater.

Peter was convinced that there was no way to stop Voldemort. The Ministry was helpless, and the Order of the Phoenix did little more than watch for Death-eater activity. He had been lured to the Dark Lord with the promise of respect, power and riches.

Respect was the one thing Peter felt he never received from his 'friends' and wizards in general. They were always reminding him how much better they were than him. Not in words so much as in their actions and attitudes. Of course the exception to that was Lily. Lily had always been mindful of the little rat-faced man, and in his mind that meant that she alone accepted and loved him. Peter would do just about anything if he could have Lily.

Power was another one of the things Peter had always envied about the other Marauders. He was always the last one to learn a spell, or to be able to transfigure an object correctly. When it came to their animagus training, it had taken him much longer than James or Sirius. Of course they were merciless with their teasing over that

part. And then there were the girls. Sirius, James, and even Remus always got the girls before him. Sirius was the worst one on that point, but he envied all three of them.

No, he would have something that they did not have! He would have respect, and if he could – Lily! He would have power! He would have riches! He would be one of the rulers under his great Master while the others groveled at his feet. It was all just a matter of time.

He had felt a bit of shame and remorse in the beginning, but that all changed after he saw how grateful his Lord was when he brought back news regarding Dumbledore and The Order of the Phoenix.

However, he had also felt the wrath of his Lord when he had failed in his assignment. He resigned himself to the fact that his Master would have to show 'tough love' if they were to succeed in their noble quest.

Peter had just come from a Death-eater's meeting where Voldemort had instructed all of his faithful followers to be on the outlook for people who were due to deliver babies at the end of July. He did not state why he was looking for the child or children, just that it was important that he be made aware of any child born around that time frame. Most of the other Death-eaters thought that it must have had something to do with one of the many rites that Voldemort had preformed on himself. Could one of these couples be carrying a child that his 'Lord' could use? He would have to let his superior know as quickly as possible.

He came back to the present and quickly recovers by saying; "Well, I guess that really doesn't give you all that much time to get everything ready then. Will you need any help James?"

"Thanks, I'm sure there are going to be some things that we will need later on, but right now, I'm just trying to get use to the idea of being a father. Do you know what this means? I have to start being responsible!"

"Parish the thought!" Sirius barked. "The next thing you know, you're going to be expecting me to grow-up or something."

"That wouldn't be such a bad idea Padfoot." Remus responded. He did always seem to be the most 'level-headed' member of the group.

"Don't get started on me Moony. Besides, this is our time to be teasing Prongs mercilessly." Sirius responded. "You know Prongs; they say they have figured out how people get pregnant now ya know."

"Okay, you can lighten up a bit here boys." James said, "Besides, you don't want to be at the wrong end of Lily's wand too soon now."

"Me! What do you mean by that?" Lily asked. "And here we were thinking about asking Padfoot to be the Godfather! I just don't know what we were thinking!"

"Are you serious?" Padfoot shouted. "I'd be honored to be the little tikes Godfather!"

"No, we're not 'Sirius', you are. But yes we are 'extremely intent' about asking you." Lily said. It was an old joke, but it was nice to be able to use it against Sirius every once in a while."

Lily continued, "While we're talking about this, Alice, we would like to know if you would be the Godmother. No offense Frank, but Padfoot's always been like a brother to James, and Alice has always been like a sister to me."

"No offense taken Lily, I was going to ask my great uncle Algie to be little Neville's Godfather, but Alice wanted you to be the Godmother if you would Lily." Frank replied.

"I would be honored, Frank, Alice. Thank you so much!" Lily said with a tear in her eye.

Everyone laughed, and congratulated the happy couples, then settled in for an evening of joking, toasting, and general good time had by all.

Scene – Voldemort's Headquarters – Riddle Manor

Peter Pettigrew (Wormtail) slipped away from his 'friends' early that evening, stating he had some 'family business' to take care of. He quickly changed into his Death-eater uniform and went to tell his immediate supervisor, Lucius Malfoy, that Lily Potter, a mudblood, and Alice Longbottom, a pure blood, were both pregnant, and due at

the end of July. Lucius would then take the information to Lord Voldemort.

"My Lord," Lucius began. "It has come to my attention that there are indeed two women who are expecting, and are due to deliver towards the latter part of July. They are Lily Potter, and Alice Longbottom. Both part of Dumbledore's Order of the Phoenix, and both working in the Department of Mysteries." He bowed regally as he finished his message.

"Ah Lucius, and how did you come across this bit of information?" Voldemort asked.

"I am always striving to find any information that may be helpful to my Lord." Lucius stated smugly.

"But I know you would not have dirtied yourself by learning this information for yourself now, would you Lucius? No! YOU wouldn't lower yourself to talk to a mudblood, or a simple administrator clerk. Trying to take credit for someone else's work? How very Slytherin of you – CRUCIO! Tell me, where did you get this information from?"

"From that little rodent of a new recruit, Wormtail, I mean, Peter Pettigrew." Lucius stated after regaining his composure from the Cruciatus curse.

"Ah yes, young Peter. Who would have thought that such a weak, pathetic wizard could be such a successful spy? Let this be a lesson to you Lucius, you do not have to be flashy and well bred to be successful. Sometimes it is best to be 'invisible' and underestimated by everyone to be of the most uses to me. Call him in. I wish to reward him."

Lucius bowed, and exited the throne room to go and get Wormtail.

Upon seeing Lucius recovering from a Cruciatus curse, and hearing that Lord Voldemort wanted to see him, Wormtail thought that his life was over. 'If he didn't like what Lucius had to tell him, he must be greatly displeased with me,' was going through his mind.

As he entered the throne room, Wormtail hurried over to Lord Voldemort to bow and kiss the hem of his robe. "I... I co... come to

ser... serve my Lord". He stayed bowed, thinking that this way he wouldn't see the killing curse coming towards him.

"Rise faithful Wormtail." Voldemort said.

Peter winced inside at his Marauder nickname. Was Lord Voldemort going to tease him like the others had done?

"Wormtail, I am impressed with the quality of information you have brought me, though others would try to take credit for it." Voldemort looked over to where Lucius was standing. "I have a special assignment for you and your connections. I want you to keep an eye on these two witches, Lily Potter and Alice Longbottom. Let me know when they know for sure when the babies will be born, and where they are at all times. This should be an easy assignment for you, but I remind you, I will not tolerate failure. Also an added bonus, you will report directly to me. You will no longer have to go through Lucius when you have information to report. This is a great privilege, do not abuse it."

Wormtail stands up a bit taller as Voldemort was praising him. This is what he was craving! For someone to recognize what a great wizard he was. And to have direct access to his Lord! That was a privilege usually reserved to only those in the inner circle. Peter puffed out his chest just a bit as he bowed low to Voldemort. "Thank you my Lord. I will not displease you or abuse this great privilege you have given to me." He bowed again, and as he left, gave Lucius a sneer worthy of a Slytherin.

"Oh Wormtail," Voldemort called out. Wormtail turned proudly to face his Lord.

"CRUCIO! Just a reminder of the cost of failure."

Scene – Vernon and Petunia Dursley's Home - # 4 Privet Drive, June 8th 1980

The Evans and the Dursley's had gotten together to throw a baby shower for Petunia and Lily. Petunia was feeling particularly miserable with just over a week until she was due to deliver.

Most of the guests had already left. Lily had been very specific in telling all of her witch friends that this was to be a VERY muggle affair and they had all acted accordingly, even going so far as

having a 'muggle fashion party' for some of the pure-bloods so that they could blend in better.

Vernon Dursley was going around counting how many presents had been given to Lily, and how many had been given to Petunia. He was determined that Lily would not receive one more present than his precious Petunia.

This had only been the second time all the Evans' and Dursley's had been together. The first time had been during Vernon and Petunia's wedding, and just like the last time, tensions were running high.

Of course John and Rose Evans knew all about Lily and James being a witch and a wizard, and accepted it. In fact, they couldn't have been happier. But Vernon Sr. and Mildred Dursley were quite shocked that there were actually 'freaks' that could make things happen by pointing a little stick at something and saying something in a long dead language. They went to great extremes to let Lily and James know about it too.

James had come at the end of the shower with Frank and Alice in a stylish, well kept Land Rover to carry the gifts home in.

For their part, Lily and James did everything they could to ease the tensions between the families. They would dress in 'normal' muggle cloths. They even went out of their way to make sure they didn't do ANY magic around the senior Dursleys – or Vernon Jr. for that matter. But the most important thing they did was just stay as far away from all the Dursleys as possible.

Alice and Frank were helping James clean up the back yard (with NO magic) of course, while Vernon Jr. was in the house talking to Lily.

"So Lily, still feel like your superior to my Petunia? I'll have you know she received three more presents today than you did, three! Ha! I guess your friends don't like you as much as Petunia's friends like her." Vernon said with a sneer.

"Vernon, I didn't come over here to have a contest with my sister. I came over here to try to mend some fences and feelings and to let her know that I'm here to support her in any way I can." Lily replied.

"Oh, is that so?" Vernon asked. "Is that why you've been going with her to those birthing classes at the Rec. center over the last few weeks?"

"I've been going with her to those classes so that when the time comes, we'll both be better prepared for the birth of our children. For your information, I'm just as scared as she is regarding how things are going to work out. I've never had a baby before. It's a totally new experience for me too you know."

"Yes, but you have those freakish little sticks, and those freakish little incantations that you can say to make it where you won't feel any pain and what not don't you?"

"Well yes, we do have Medi-witches that can help us during delivery. But as a sign of good faith to you, and to prove that I am just like my sister, James and I have decided that we will have our baby the same muggle... ah, non-magical way as you and Petunia are having yours. No magic, no hocus-pocus. Just natural child birth so that you can see that we are just like you."

"Ha, that's not bloody likely." Vernon mumbled in reply.

There conversation was cut short with the sound of several loud 'Popping' sounds coming from the Dursley's back yard. Lily looked out in horror to see several people dressed in black robes wearing white masks apparating in to the area. Lily knew that somehow Death-eaters had found them.

Not waiting for Vernon to act, Lily grabbed him by the arm and opened up the cupboard door under the stairs.

"What do you think you're doing ya daft woman! I'll never fit in there!"

Lily took out her wand and said - *Extensus cella antepagamentum decoris idem* (Enlarge space, exterior looks the same). She then shoved him through the door, closed it, and locked it just for good measure. She had to get outside to help her husband, protect her sister and try to save her parents!

"Vernon, I'm sorry, but you'll be safer there. I'll come get you out as soon as we take care of a little problem." And with that Lily ran out to see what was happening.

When she got there, she found that about ten Death-eaters had decided to crash the party.

Immediately upon arriving, both the senior Evans and Dursley's had been killed with the killing curse Avada Kedavra before anyone was even fully aware that the Death-eaters were there.

James jumped into action by grabbing Petunia and pulling her out of the way as another killing curse went by, and placing her behind him, began fighting Death-eaters. Frank was just as quick, but first sent off an alarm charm to DMLE letting them know that there was a Death-eaters attack, and to send more Aurors.

Alice was not known for her fighting abilities, but when faced with someone trying to injure or kill her in her condition, she turned into a fierce lioness protecting her almost-born cub. INCENDI SCUTICAE CUNCTUM! (Fire whip all) she yelled as the Lestranges' rushed her. The fiery whip lashed out and caught Bellatrix, Rodolphus, and Rabastan in the mid-section injuring them severally.

"You bitch!" Bellatrix yelled. "You will pay for that someday!" And with that she apparated away, Rodolphus and Rabastan followed shortly there after.

Alice had no way of knowing that Bellatrix had just found out that she too was pregnant, and would have delivered the beginning of a healthy new generation of Death-eaters ready for her Masters service.

The 'Fire whip' would have all but guaranteed that Bella would lose the baby, and probable never be able to have children. To say that she was furious would have been an understatement! Alice Longbottom had just taken away her opportunity to bear children for the Dark Lord! She vowed then and there that Alice would pay for her actions, and if possible, she would take Alice's baby from her if she could – or take her baby away and raise him as her own. Raise him to be a Death-eater in the service of our great Dark Lord.

Coming out of the house, Lily helped James fight off the remaining Death-eaters by using some of the new spells she had been working on in the Department of Mysteries. Due to the nature of these spells, and the fact that she was seven months pregnant, she couldn't do too much, but it was enough to let James and Frank get the upper hand on the remaining Death-eaters.

Pulling Petunia and Alice into the safety of the house, Lily went about comforting her sister, and to get Alice settled down. Petunia was now the only family Lily had left in the world and she would protect her no matter the cost.

Petunia was crying uncontrollable, and was very close to going into early labor. She was still in shocked at the sudden death of her parents and the terror and confusion that was going on outside. It was just too much for her to take. She had just watched as her parents and in-laws were both killed in front of her – just feet from where she stood. She felt defenseless, and was resigned to die before James had pulled her back. She was also afraid because she didn't know where her husband was.

As Lily calmed her down, Petunia could hear Vernon banging on the cupboard door, trying to get out. "What have you done to my husband?" she spat out at Lily.

"I placed him in the cupboard where he would be safe. Don't worry, I enlarged the inside of the cupboard first before I put him in there, and then locked the door so that the Death-eaters couldn't get to him. He's safe enough in there" was Lily's reply.

"So you think that you're so special that you can just come in here, remodel my home, and lock my husband up while I have to be... to be out there watching our parents and my in-laws be killed right before my eyes! Vernon should have been out there with me! He would have shown you and your kind what a real man could do! You let him out right this minute!" Petunia screamed.

Lily didn't want to argue with Petunia right now. She knew that if Vernon had been out there, he probable would have died trying to stand up to one of the Death-eaters. But now, all she could do is go over to the cupboard, and unlocked it and let Vernon out. Immediately Vernon came spilling out white as a ghost! Who would have known that he was claustrophobic?

As soon as he got up however, he too started yelling at Lily.

"HOW DARE YOU MANHANDLE ME LIKE THAT? I DON'T CARE WHO OR WHAT YOU ARE! THIS IS MY HOUSE AND I WILL NOT BE TREATED IN THAT MANNER."

That was when he noticed Petunia crying in the front room, hyperventilating. "What have you done to her?" Vernon bellowed. "If you have done any of your freakishness on her and she loses this baby, you'll be held responsible."

"Vernon, there has been a terrible incident outside. Some of the followers of an evil ... 'person' in our 'world' attacked out back while we were in here talking," Lily started out. "They are known as Death-eaters, and I am afraid that both of our parents have been killed."

Vernon was shocked. He had always revered his father. The man could do no wrong in Vernon's eyes. He was the one who showed him how to get ahead in business by lying, cheating and bribery.

It was their fault, them and their kind. They were freaks just like his father had said, and now he was dead.

"GET OUT!" Vernon screamed. "GET OUT OF MY HOUSE NOW! You and your kind are not welcome here."

James had come in to the house just in time to hear Vernon's bellowing. He may have been blooded and his cloths torn, but he was not about to let ANYONE talk to his wife like that!

"Now wait just a minute now Vernon." James started.

"NO! You don't 'just a minute' you little freak!" Vernon spit out.

James had his wand in Vernon's face before he know what had happened, the tip of the wand was glowing white hot, and Vernon could feel it.

"You will listen to what I have to say Vernon!" James fired back.

"I'm sorry this had to happen today. This was to have been a day of gladness and rejoicing. Instead, it has turned into a day of great

sorrow for all of us. Remember, you aren't the only one who lost their parents today! Petunia and Lily also have reason to mourn! They are probable still in shock and haven't had time to process what has happened yet. But when they do, they will need both of us there beside them to help them ease the pain."

"We have tried to show you that we are not so different from you. In fact, you might say that we are muggles too, it's just that we can do magic."

"Now let's not get too carried away with the blame game. The Unspeakables are already here to modify the memories of anyone outside of the family who may have seen or heard anything. They have also repaired any damage that had occurred outside. The local police have already been called and will be here any minute. Right now, I think the Unspeakables are going to modify their memories so that it will appear that all 4 people died of either a heart attack or a stroke I know that normally that would be hard to believe, but the police and the Medical Examiner will accept it as fact."

"If you would like, I will take care of the Evans funeral arrangements. I'm sure you and your wife can take care of your parents. Again, I'm sorry for what has happened today. I would like to stay friends with you." James extended his hand to Vernon in a show of comfort and support. Vernon looked down at the proffered hand and said, "Not bloody likely." With that he turned his back to the Potters and went back outside to help the para-medical who had just arrived.

James and Lily stayed until the Police and the Medical Examiner left. They had told them that it must have been the excitement of having both women so close to delivering that had facilitated the elder couples to have heart attacks / strokes.

As Lily and James were leaving to go and make funeral arrangements for Lily and Petunia's parents, James turned to Petunia and said "When I pulled you away from that Death-eater out there to save your life, I gained a 'life debt' from you Petunia. The day may come when I turn upon you to collect that debt and you will be honor bound to perform it."

"Just take your 'life debt', your little twigs, and your freaky unnaturalness and leave this place!" Vernon bellowed. But Petunia knew in her heart that what James had said was true.

James, Lily, Frank and Alice all sat quietly in the Land Rover as they made their way back to Godric's Hollow.

"How do you think they found us James?" Lily asked.

James had been thinking about that since the attack.

"I'm afraid I may have led them there today when Frank and I came over in the Land Rover." James said quietly.

"It seems Voldemort has placed a price on our heads for getting in his way of world domination. I guess someone must have seen us in the Land Rover and placed a tracking charm on it. Then all they would have had to do is wait for the car to stop moving, and send out the hit squad."

"I don't know if you saw, but he sent all three Lestranges' out after us. Alice, you did a great job in dispatching them so quickly. You can come join us as an Auror as soon as you get off of maternity leave." James half teased, half praised his partners wife.

Alice blushed as she rested in the back seat with her head on her husbands shoulder. "I think I'll stay where I'm at thank you very much! It's bad enough worrying about Frank every time he goes to work. No... I just got lucky out there. As soon as I saw those three rushing towards me, something just ... I don't know... snapped. I knew I had to protect my child at all cost and did the first spell I thought of that would do the most damage to the most people at once. I guess they weren't expecting anything from me, and so didn't have time to get a shield up before I attacked them. I just wish Bella would have been another step closer. Then maybe we could have put that rabid dog (AN: You can substitute your own word in here) down."

Alice was still rather upset that someone had tried to harm her and her unborn child.

After arrive home at Godric's Hollow, Frank and James unloaded the car as Lily and Alice went inside to freshen up and get some tea.

The Potters and Longbottoms talked for a while longer before calling it a night.

As Lily and James got ready for bed, Lily sat on the edge of the bed thinking.

"Lily? What's the matter love?"

"I was just thinking about the attack this afternoon James."

"I know hun, I know, I miss your folks too, but we'll make it through." James said trying to comfort his wife.

"No, no, not that part. It's the ... oh what do you call it ... 'target selection' that the Death-eaters had during the attach."

"What do you mean?" James was confused now.

"Well, it seems strange to me that the first people that they would eliminate were the muggles, and then to after the pregnant witch. I mean, Petunia would have been killed as well if you hadn't pulled her out of the way when you did. I know Mum and Dad are gone now, but why did the Lestranges' go after Alice next instead of you and Frank? I would have thought it would have made more sense to take the fighters out before going after Alice and me. I mean, we were really lucky she was able to defend herself so well this afternoon. I don't know if I could have handled losing her also. Don't get me wrong, you're doing a great job providing support for me being like this; but it helps so much having Alice there to talk about how you feel from day to day because you know she knows exactly what you're going through, because she's going through the same thing."

"Oh, I'm just so upset right now I can't even think right!" Lily screamed as she threw herself on the bed.

Coming over James knelt down by his wife to where he could hold her and rub her back to let her know he was there for her. He leaned up to where he could be by her ear to whisper word of comfort and support to her.

Lily didn't move. The terrors of the day had finally hit her full force. She had lost her parents. She had almost lost her sister and her best friend, and for some reason, it seemed like the Death-eaters

were more interested in attacking the women, then the Aurors that where there.

After a long while, Lily ended up crying herself out as sleep over took her.

Carefully, and lovingly, James levitated her to where she could lay comfortable on the bed.

Lying beside her, he put his arm around her to hold her tight and said, "Don't worry my love I'm here to protect you. Sleep well, dream well. Remember the good times. I will always be here to support you. Goodnight my love."

End Chapter 2

Chapter 3 - A Call from Dumbledore

The next several weeks went as well as could be expected for both Lily and Alice.

Between talking with her husband, and talking with Alice, Lily was able to get over the loss of parents fairly quickly.

Both Alice and Lily had decided to work as long as they could to keep their minds busy, and off of the battles and attacks that were around them everywhere.

Both couples had learned through their Order of the Phoenix meetings that Professor Dumbledore had been able to procure a new 'spy' within Voldemort's Death-eaters and that he had information that could be important to both the Potter's and the Longbottom's.

Lily continued to work on new spells and rites for the war effort against Voldemort and his Death-eaters. One set of rites she was working on, would allow the Aurors to increase the size of the magical core thus allowing them to cast more powerful spells. This was important since it had become apparent that many of Voldemort's supporters were undergoing what were considered 'Dark rituals' to increase their strength. Unfortunately, many of these 'Dark rituals' that Voldemort's followers had participated in had severe side effects.

The problem with Lily's rites were that they too were considered 'Dark' since they required a small amount of blood from the Auror so that the rites could be more finely attuned to that Auror, but Lily had made sure that the normal 'blood sacrifice' was not required, thus, the participant would not be corrupted. As Lily tried to explain it, "It's like putting 'Miracle Grow' on your magical core" (Of course most of the wizards didn't know what she was talking about). But even these rituals could only take you so far. Without constant hard work, the core would slowly reduce back to its original size. But if you worked hard enough, for a long enough period of time (one lunar cycle), the magical core would 'settle' into its new size and the change appeared to be permanent.

The main ritual the Ministry was concerned about was called 'The Ritual of Anthrokrak'. This was used to rip a wizard's magical core from them, and merge it with the magical core of another person.

The Ministry wasn't too concerned about Voldemort having done that yet for several reasons; 1) You had to have two 'Cauldron's of Chaos' in order to brew the different potions, and 2) you could only perform this ritual five times. However, several of the Unspeakables in the Department of Mysteries had pointed out that Voldemort was insane enough to allow five of his more powerful inner circle to perform this ritual on themselves, and then use them as a sacrifice in the ritual for him – in effect giving him the magical cores of a total of 30 wizards (the five from the inner circle, plus the twenty five that they had previously absorbed)!

Of course, the Unspeakables also stated that, given enough time, the inner circle five could do the same thing. But they didn't think that Voldemort would be patient enough for that, or that he would want to tip his hand to his inner circle to think that they were only being used as a sacrifice for him to reach his ultimate goal. After all, what good is having power if you're dead, and can't use it?

Another spell that Lily had developed would help the Aurors learn new information faster by transferring the knowledge of a spell or any other given subject from one person's mind to others. This spell would greatly speed up learning of a spell or charm, however, the Auror had to still practice the spell to get the fine muscle motor skills needed for the wand movement, and to learn how much energy the spell or charm would require.

Lily was getting a bit upset with the short sightedness of the Ministry in preventing her from doing her job and the way they regarded Voldemort and his followers. They wanted her to develop new, more powerful spells that could be used by the Aurors, not some 'Dark ritual' even if it were only to be used by the Ministry.

She knew that she could develop all the powerful new spells they wanted all day long, but if you didn't have a powerful witch or wizard with a large enough magical reserve, these powerful spells wouldn't mean a thing! Either the Auror wouldn't be powerful enough to cast the spell, or could only cast it once or twice before being completely magically exhausted.

Arriving home that night, Lily was approached by Sassy, a house elf.

"Mistress Lily?" Sassy started.

"Yes Sassy? And please, you can call me Lily when we're alone like this." Lily stated kindly. She had been trying for over a year to get the house elf's to lighten up just a little bit with this arcane attitude they had about address the master and mistress of the house.

"Thank you mistress, Sassy will be trying." Sassy said yet again. All Lily could do was roll her eyes.

"Mistress, you's is having a fire-call from Professor Dumbledore. He's is wanting you and Master James to floo to Hogwarts for dinner at 6:30 PM this evening and a meeting afterward. He's is saying it is very important for both you's and Master James to attend. He's is also saying that the Longbottom's will be there."

'What could be so important that Albus would want Alice and me to floo to Hogwarts in our eighth month of pregnancy?' Lily asked herself. 'All I can say is, this had better be good, or he'll have the wrath of two pregnant women to run from.'

Lily fire-called James to let him know about the dinner appointment, and to make sure he came home in time to change and get ready.

At 6:00 PM James and Lily flooed to 'The Three Broomsticks' in Hogsmeade. They would use the extra time to take a nice stroll to the castle. Normally, it would take only 20 minutes to walk from Hogsmeade to Hogwarts, but Lily would need a few minutes more in her current condition. She may be 8 months pregnant, but still she was in pretty good shape, and she and James did take a half hour walk most evenings, so this really was nothing.

Approaching the castle, they where a bit surprised to see that Professor Dumbledore greeted them at the door instead of Mr. Finch or Professor McGonagall.

"Ah, you made it! How good to see you again James, Lily. I should have had you floo directly to my office like the Longbottom's had done. Oh well, I'm sure the walk did you both wonders." Dumbledore's eyes were twinkling brightly as he looked at the young couple. They were both so full of life, and just starting this new

phase of their life. But there was something else that Lily saw in his eyes. Was it pain? Remorse? Misgivings? It seemed that a great burden was on his shoulders and he had to, reluctantly; shift that burden to younger shoulders than his.

Following the Headmaster up the stairs and down the halls to his office, Professor Dumbledore and the Potter's mostly made small talk. Lily did glare at James for a few moments thinking about how much easier it would have been if they could have flooed to the Headmaster's office instead of the 'little' walk they just had. Not that it really mattered, but right about now, the strain on her back and her legs were beginning to feel the effects of trying to offset her pregnant belly protruding out in front of her.

Upon reaching the gargoyles, the Headmaster gave the password ('Hershey's Kisses'), and the small group proceeded to the Headmaster's office. Alice and Lily ran and greeted each other with a long hug and small talk. After telling each other how beautiful they looked (they both laughed) they returned their attention back to the gentlemen in the room.

"Before we talk, let's relax and enjoy this fine meal the house elves have made. They don't have much opportunity to work during the summer, so I'm sure this will be a meal to be remembered." Dumbledore said.

Everyone smiled and agreed, but Lily had the impression that something else was going on and that Professor Dumbledore was trying to get everybody as comfortable and relaxed as possible.

The evening was truly one to be remembered. The house elves had truly outdone themselves, and everybody agreed that they couldn't remember a finer meal, or a finer time spent together.

At the end, as drinks were being handed out, (fire-whiskey for the men, and pumpkin juice for the women), Lily broke the silence. "Alright Professor, we've been wine and dined, and have had a totally enjoyable evening, so, why do I get the impression that – as the muggles say – 'the shoe is about to drop'?"

Professor Dumbledore's smile slipped from his face. His eyes stopped their twinkle, and his proud, strong shoulders slumped down, and looked defeated.

"Of course you are correct as usual Lily." Dumbledore began. "I did not mean to bring you here on false pretense, but I do have something of great importance to talk to both of you about. But before I get started, may I ask when your babies are due?"

Alice and Lily looked at each other for a second, each seeing the shock and confusion in the other one's eyes.

"Well Professor, my son will be born the latter part of July." Alice answered.

"Same for mine, my son will be born in the latter part of July or early August. Why?" Lily asked.

Professor Dumbledore motioned them to come into an adjacent room and sit around a circular table which held a large pensive on it.

"As you may or may not know," he started, "I have been directed by the Board of Governors to find someone to teach the 'art' of Divination."

The other occupants in the room gave a brief 'smirk' as they recalled the last Divination teacher 'Professor Plum'. He was so bad; he couldn't even predict his own death, with a rope in his own Study. But let us not think ill of the dead.

"Yes, well, be that as it may, I have been interviewing several candidates that were just about as creditable as our late Professor Plum. Then last of all, I interviewed a Miss Sybill Trelawney. She is the great, great grand daughter of Cassandra Trelawney. Cassandra was truly a person gifted with the 'inner-eye'. But as far as I could tell, Sybill possessed no such gift."

"I was just about to dismiss the meeting with her when she went into an involuntary trance, and stated what I believe to be a true prophecy."

"It involves the downfall of Lord Voldemort and possible, one of your infants as well."

Lord Voldemort has learned the first part of the prophecy, as an unidentified person was outside the door where the meeting was

being held, before the bartender of 'The Hogs Head' discovered him and chased him out of the bar."

"Oh, so that's where that back door came from." whispered James to Frank.

With that, Professor Dumbledore placed the tip of his wand to his forehead and withdrew a small, silver memory strand from his mind. After placing the memory into the pensive, and giving a wave, the lights in the office dimmed, and a small silver image of Sybill Trelawney rose from the liquid.

Everyone was quiet as the image began to speak:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches...Born to those who have thrice defied him...Born as the seventh month dies...

With that the silver image sank back into the pensive.

"That's it? That's the whole prophecy?" James asked angrily.

"No James that is not it. But I feel that for now, it is in the interest of the greater good that this is all you know. You and the Longbottom's are the only two couples that even begin to meet the criteria of this prophecy."

"Both you and Frank have been a pain in Lord Voldemort's side since you started as Aurors. You both have escaped from his Death Eater numerous times, and are the only two Aurors to have escaped when facing Voldemort several times."

"Ya, it's what now, three times Frank? And each time get luckier and luckier."

"Right now you have enough stress in your lives with the upcoming births of your son's. Let's get past that point and see where we go to from here." Came Albus' reply.

Neither James nor Frank was happy with that response.

"No Albus, you will tell us the rest of the prophecy now." Frank yelled. "You can't just bring us in here to wine and dine us and then

just drop this type of a bombshell on us and not tell us the whole thing!"

Alice and Lily were sitting there dumbfounded, crying softly into their husbands' shoulders at the magnitude of these opening lines.

One of their children could have the power to vanquish the Dark Lord? Which one? What was the power? How did they get this power? HOW WOULD THEY KNOW WHICH CHILD WAS IT TO BE? Could this someone already be alive born in the latter part of July?

Dumbledore raised his hand to calm the two couples down.

"Now, now Frank. Nothing will be gained by raising our voice like that." Dumbledore stated calmly, his eyes twinkling in over-drive. "I have some experience in these things. I knew that I had to inform you and the Potter's that there was a prophecy out there. But I feel it is best to take things slowly." "I would recommend that both of you go into hiding as soon as the babies are born. Lily, I believe you are familiar with the Fidelius Charm are you not?"

Lily ended her sniffs as she looked at the Headmaster. She had to stop and think about what the Headmaster had said, and was just barely aware that he had asked her a question.

"What? The Fidelius Charm? Yes I am familiar with that charm. It is where you use a Secret Keeper to hide the location of a person, place or thing, I think, but it's very hard to perform. It takes a great deal of power, and a person who you can trust without question or reservation."

"Very good Lily! 5 points to Gryffindor!" That got a small chuckle from the girls, but their husband's were still just as upset as before.

"Now look here Professor, you can't get off the hook that easy." This time it was James who was ready to spit nails.

"You can turn off the damn twinkle for all I care, it won't work on me! You have to tell us the whole prophecy NOW!"

Professor Dumbledore stopped, and looked coldly over the top of his half-moon glasses. Indeed the twinkle had gone out of his eyes as

he looked as James and replied quietly: "Remember who you are talking to James. Not only have I received the Order of Merlin – First Class, but I am also the Grand Sorcerer and Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot; the Supreme Mugwump of International Confederation of Wizards; and the Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. I think I know more about this type of thing than you do."

The dressing-down did its job, Frank and James both shut-up, for a few moments, but they still had red, angry faces and you could see small puffs of steam come out from beneath their collars.

"But Professor, you have to tell us!" Alice cried. "There are a thousand questions that I have, and I'm sure Lily has even more questions, that need to be answered; that HAVE to be answered!"

Dumbledore looked sweetly at the two expectant mothers, giving the impression of a kind, understanding Grandfather. "I understand how you feel my dears, but now is not the time to answer these questions. We must be prepared for the birth of these two marvelous babies, and get everything you need to go into hiding. You know I will be there to help you, as well as all of the members of The Order of the Phoenix. You have many other things to be thinking about; where you will be living; who will be your secret keeper; and other more important things."

Lily looked up sharply at Professor Dumbledore, then over to her husband James. 'We're not going to make it out of this alive!' She thought to herself. Something in the way that Professor Dumbledore had phrased his last statement had triggered a vision in her mind where she knew, regardless of which child was selected as the chosen one, she and James would be dead, and they wouldn't be there to raise their son.

Lily resolved that she would do everything in her power to see that her son survived the coming dark days regardless of the cost to herself and James.

James noticed that Lily had become quiet, and had stopped crying. He stopped arguing with Dumbledore and came over to his wife. "What is it honey, are you alright?" He asked sincerely.

"Yes dear. I'm fine, but I think it is time for us to go home." Was Lily's replied.

It was clear that Professor Dumbledore was not going to explain anything else with regards to the prophecy and so James asked for his permission to use his fireplace so that he and Lily could return home. Frank and Alice indicated that they too should be going home as it was getting late.

Scene – James and Lily Potter's home

Arriving home, James had started to head upstairs to get ready for bed. Lily stopped him and asked him to come into the kitchen for a few minutes.

"James," she said. "We need to get everything ready."

"Hu? What? What are you talking about Lily? I know Dumbledore said..."

"I'm not talking about what Dumbledore said James! We have to get everything ready because... because..." she couldn't finish the statement but started crying instead.

"Because we aren't going to be there. Are we?" James asked softly, holding on to his wife and comforting her. All Lily could do was shake her head 'no'.

"When the Headmaster said that we had to get 'more important things' ready, I had a glimpse into the future... a premonition that we would not be around to see our Harry grow and develop. At least not here."

"We need to get EVERYTHING ready for our Harry: guardians, where his elementary schooling will take place, where he will live - I want him to have children his own age - school trust fund, everything."

"We need to make sure he does not go to my sister and her husband! They would hate him as much as they hate us. I know that every time Petunia sees me now, all she can think about is the death of our parents by those Death-eaters!"

"Shhh... I know honey, I know. Come on, let's go up to bed and get some rest. We have a lot of planning to do in the next few weeks."

With that, Lily and James retired upstairs to their bedroom.

For her part, Lily was now, just too tired to worry much about what had just transpired. She didn't have the time or the energy to waste on Dumbledore's antics. She still had one week more to go at work, and the Ministry still wanted new and improved charms and spells to use in their fight against Voldemort and she had to make sure that she and James had everything ready for Harry, not if, but when they died.

Lily took the time to sit on the edge of her bed, and relax and clear her mind. She had learned that Occlumency helped her think clearly when she was working on a spell, and she didn't need this information from Dumbledore distracting her. But she couldn't get it to go away completely.

Just one more week, then three months for maternity leave. Lily thought that there probable wasn't another mother-to-be who wanted their pregnancy to go long. Anything so that her Harry wouldn't be involved with that stupid prophecy.

As James came over to join her in bed, Lily rolled over (as best she could) to cuddle close to James. She needed to feel his strength and support right now.

"James," she started out.

"Hum." came an unenthusiastic reply.

What if it is Frank and Alice's baby? We'll still want to do something to help them. We can't let them face this alone; after all, I will be little Neville's Godmother. It's my responsibility to look after him."

"We won't let them face it alone. Frank's my partner, and almost as close to me as Sirius is. I don't want anything happening to them either. Let's just go to sleep now, and try to address the problems tomorrow. Okay?" James kissed his wife on the top of the forehead.

"Okay, thanks dear. Good night, I love you."

"I love you too Lily."

End Chapter 3.

Essences of Lily – Chapter 4 - And then along came Harry.

Lily could not believe the pain she was currently in. It was almost unbearable! Why had she agreed to have the baby this way just to try to appease Vernon and Petunia?

She had convinced James to let her have this baby 'naturally' in a muggle hospital using a birthing technique called 'The Lamaze method' in a 'birthing' room as opposed to an operating room.

She and James had even gone to the muggle classes for six weeks with Petunia so that Lily could be Petunia's 'coach' and James could act as her 'coach' and she could experience the 'wonders' of childbirth without drugs or charms.

Too bad that Petunia had to have an emergency C-section when her little Dudley was born.

Right now, she wasn't having such a good time.

"You did this to me! If you EVER touch me again you're a dead man" Lily screamed.

James was sitting there at the side of his wife not knowing how he should feel. On the one hand, he hated to see Lily in so much pain; but on the other hand, her hormones were so far out of whack, that the mood swings she was having almost made him laugh... but he would never do that to her, she was in too much pain.

In the mean time, all he could do is feed her ice chips, wipe the sweat off of her forehead, rub her arms, back and belly with one hand, help her change position while his other hand was being crushed in a death grip by Lily.

He was trying to remember all the information the instructor had given them in the Lamaze class... Have the patient focus on her breathing – long, relaxing breaths, in and out: in and out. Call a count for the breath. "Breath in – one, two, three, four, five. Breath out – one, two, three, four, five. Concentrate on the breathing."

"I don't care if they say it is impossible. You're having the next baby. Let's see how you like pushing a bowling ball out from between your hips." Lily yelled back to James. "Ah! I can't believe that humankind

has to go through something like this to perpetuate its kind! They'd be extinct if this is what it is like all the time! How do those Weasley's do it?" The Daily Prophet had just had an article about a wizarding family that had just welcomed their 6th child into the world. An oddity in the magical world where most families had 3 or fewer children.

"Come on honey, you were the one that wanted to do it this way." James felt a little bit guilty bring this up, but he was trying to do anything that would help Lily at this point in time.

"And you didn't try to talk me out of it! I thought you said you loved me!"

"Come on now Lily, let's try to concentrate on the breathing. Listen to my voice - Breath in – one, two, three, four, five. Breath out – one, two, three, four, five."

"Listen to your voice? How do you think I ended up like this? By listening to your voice – and see where it got me?" Lily was just a little hysterical.

Flashback – Earlier that Morning

Earlier today, July 30th 1980, Lily had witnessed Alice give birth at St. Mungo's in about 30 minutes after Frank finally got her to the hospital. Alice had been in light labor for about two hours while Frank ran around their apartment trying to get everything packed that they would need when she got to the hospital, but her contractions where still more then 10 minutes apart.

The mediwitch walked in, cast a numbing spell, a relaxation spell, a baby monitoring spell, and a light contraction spell on Alice, and it seemed like it was all over in no time.

After the birth, and delivering the placenta, there where just a few more spells to clean up Alice, and Neville before Neville was presented to Alice and Frank for bonding. If you looked at each of them you could see the pure white aura of love surrounding this new family.

Neville was a beautiful, loving bouncing baby boy: 19 and a half inches long, 7 lbs. 10 oz., ten fingers, ten toes, and an adorable little

button nose. But he did seem to be a bit fidgety. That is until his mother took care of the situation.

After Neville's feeding and rooting around, he fell into a peaceful sleep on top of his mother, with his father gentle rubbing small circles on his back.

Lily's water broke at 1:30 PM after she had returned home from visiting Alice. She had to floo-call James to tell him to come home NOW and take her to the muggle hospital. Lily was upset now that she hadn't used St. Mungo's, but hey, after seeing how easy it was for Alice, Lily felt confident that things would go well for her also. Soon her little Harry would be here.

End Flashback

It was now 9:30 PM. Lily had only dilated to 7 cm and the contractions were almost constant.

"I think we are going to have to help things along here." The attending physician said. He gave instructions for the nurse to set up 'the pit'. A Pitocin drip would help intensive the labor contractions and hopefully allow the birth to occur naturally. "We may also want to get an epidural ready in case Mrs. Potter wants something for pain. As is, I'm going to be ready to do an episiotomy if we can't get things moving along by midnight or if the baby shows any signs of distress."

For the next two hours Lily suffered while James tried to comfort her any way he could by continually holding her hand, rubbing her arms and belly, feeding her ice chips, and helping her reposition herself for more comfort.

Lily had to fall back to her occlumency training to separate the pain from James voice.

Finally at around 11:30 PM the doctor came in and said: "OK, that's better, you're fully dilated to 10 cm and ready to deliver."

Remembering their breathing technique, they started with some short breaths so that Lily wouldn't feel the desire to push. "OK now, remember, short, short, long... short, short, long." James kept

repeating. Even going so far as to blow in Lily's face to help her remember her breathing technique.

It must have worked. Lily was able to work with the nurse and doctor in getting ready to deliver. There was still one problem. It seemed that Harry wasn't quite ready to come out now, and had started to turn while in the birthing canal. The doctor acted quickly by grabbing part of the forceps and using it, got Harry turned the right way.

Just as the clock in the birthing room struck 12:00 Midnight, the doctor said: "I see the head crowning! OK now Lily, just one more good push!"

Taking a moment to compose herself, Lily took a big breath and then 'bore down' as hard as she could.

The head came smoothly out. With a slight turn, the right shoulder popped out – and after that the rest of Harry.

"TIME!" the doctor called.

"12:00:15 seconds – July 31st." the nurse replied.

"Congratulations, Mr. and Mrs. Potter. You have a fine, strong, healthy boy."

The doctor had James tie off and cut the baby's umbilical cord.

It took a bit longer to deliver the placenta and get Harry cleaned up then it did for Neville. But Lily and James didn't notice. Lily was now on a super natural endorphin high from the birthing rush. James just sat there telling Lily how proud he was of her over, and over again. Any husband that has seen his wife go through childbirth knows; they have married far above their station in life to have someone willing to go through that much pain to bring another life into this world.

A short while later, the nurse returned with Harry and placed him on Lily's chest. The feeling of love and family that they felt was almost overwhelming.

"Oh, look at him James! He's so perfect! I can't wait until he has a little brother or sister to play with. How soon do you think it will be

before we can start working on that?" Lily asked dreamily as Harry nursed.

James, knowing better then to answer just now, so he just said: "We'll see honey; we'll just wait and see."

With all three Potter's present, they too started to bond together as a family, but the aura that shown around them wasn't just the pure white as with most wizarding family's; This aura had red, gold, and blue highlights at the extremity of its edge. A powerful feeling of contentment came over the family, as if the song of a phoenix were present... but not heard by anyone there.

'All my love I give to thee, Harry', Lily thought. Feeling her heart, and love reach out and encompass the newborn babe. After the better part of an hour, the nurses came and placed young Harry in the nursery, and each family member slipped into a peaceful rest.

Early the next morning, a loud, excited godfather bounded into the birthing room waked James up.

"Where is he? Let me see him! James, I can't believe you didn't tell us where you were having the baby here. We knew you left work early, but we all just expected to see you later that day at St. Mungo's when we went to check on Frank and Alice. We had these announcements made up to give to all your friends:"

ANNOUNCING THE FIRST OF MANY PRODUCTS FROM THE WORKSHOP OF POTTER/EVANS ENTERPRISES THEIR LATEST PRODUCTION MODEL

Model Name: Harry James Potter

Size: 21 inches long

Weight: 8 lbs. 6 oz.

Features: Dual lung powered air horn

Interchangeable cloth or plastic seat covers

Quadra track movement (arms and legs)

Messy Black soft-top covering (Soon to grow thick and hard)

Beautiful green dual optical scanners

And the cutest godfather anyone could ask for

Mother and baby are fine. Father can be found in the long-term care area at St. Mungo's

"Well, what do you think? Ah, that doesn't really matter we've already sent this out to everyone in the Aurors department."

"What? Please tell me you didn't! It's too early in the morning for this Padfoot. Don't you know that Harry didn't decide to show up until after Midnight this morning? And one more thing, if you wake Lily up, you'll have to answer to her!"

"That's OK honey, I'm already awake. Hey Padfoot, are Moony and Wormtail coming?" Lily asked.

"Moony's still a bit tired from the full moon on the 27th, but he should be around here soon. As for Wormtail, I don't know, he sort of disappeared after you and Alice delivered this morning. I'm sure he's around. Probable didn't want to see all that blood and stuff," Sirius stated. "So, where is the little tike, I've got to start spoiling him as quickly as I can."

"The nurse took him just a few minutes ago to give him a checkup and his first serial of immunization shots. Then, after they check to see if I'm OK, we should be released and able to go home." Lily said.

"Give me five seconds and a good healing charm and I'll have you out of here even quicker" said James.

"No James, we talked about this before. No spells at least until we get home. Then I have a whole list of healing and cushion charms I want to use. Remember, this will probable be the last time I come to a muggle hospital. I mean I can't believe the difference in the birthing procedure. Alice was in the birthing room for only about four hours total, where as I just went through eleven hours of hard labor for the same results!" Lily pointed out.

"Just remember, this is what you ask for." James stated defensively.

"Yes, it is. And even though I hear the time between labor and delivery is much shorter on subsequent deliveries, I think I can find other things to keep me happy then going through that again."

Sirius was starting to get restless when the door opened and a nurse appeared carrying a small bundle rapped in a receiving blanket. The only thing exposed was a tuft of black hair sticking out the top.

"Here you go Mrs. Potter, your new baby boy. I must say, he is one of the cutest, and strongest little baby we've see in here for quite some time."

"Thank you," said Lily, as she took the small bundle in her arms. Harry was asleep. He looked so peaceful there – without a care in the world. Lily couldn't help but smile as she looked down at him, humming a lullaby, and trying to straighten out his messy hair. "He defiantly has your hair James." Lily said lovingly.

James was at his wife's side looking down at Harry. A feeling of sheer joy and amazement filled his soul as he beheld the tiny miracle. He leaned over to kiss Lily again, thanking her for allowing him to be a part of this miracle. Then he leaned over and kissed Harry on the top of the head, and said: "Hey little guy, welcome into the world. May you find peace and love all your days."

All of this was just a little bit too sappy for Sirius as he stepped forward, as said: "All right, all right, break it up, godfather coming through to spoil his godson. Lily, would you be so kind as to introduce me to this fine young man?"

Lily laughed at Sirius' antics. Actually, when they ask Sirius to be Harry's godfather, she felt that he might not take the job 'serious'. But now she could see the love in his eyes, and just a little quiver in his voice. He was truly touched to be trusted with something this precious. "Sure Sirius, here ya go. Harry, this is your godfather Sirius Black. Sirius, this is your godson, Harry James Potter." With that she gentle placed Harry in Sirius' arms.

Sirius carefully took the little sleeping bundle from his mother's arms, and thought for a moment. 'What am I doing? I don't know how to hold a baby. I don't know the first thing about babies – well, except

how to ... never mind. I know that if I drop him, if James doesn't kill me, Lily will.'

He looked like he was holding a fragile china doll. "Don't worry Sirius he won't break – at least not like those china dolls we practiced with." James joked.

Sirius turned his head and smirked back at James. Then, getting a little bit more comfortable with little Harry in his arms, started to talk to him.

"Hey there Prongs junior." Sirius whispered so as to not wake up Harry, "I'm your godfather, Sirius. I plan on being the best godfather anyone could have. So expect to be spoiled. I have a lot to tell you about you old man, and old lady."

"Sirius!" Both James and Lily half shouted, half laughed.

"Just kidding folks. I wanted to see if you were listening to me or too busy making plans for the future."

Lily and James just rolled their eyes and groaned.

"Honestly Harry, you come from two of the finest people I've ever met and you will have a lot to live up to if you want to honor and respect their standards."

Sirius looked up from Harry and asked, "James, Lily, would you mind if I gave Harry an ancient Black family blessing? This is something I found years ago before I even went to Hogwarts."

"Just before I turned eleven, I went with my father to Gringotts, and snuck through the old family vault while he was looking for something for the Dark Lord. I had been thinking how one day I would be the head of the ancient and noble house of Black, and I knew that there would be several people who wouldn't be too happy with that. What I was looking for is a charm or a potion, or something that could protect me from those who were more powerful than me. I found something that was called 'The Blessing of the Heir' that was used by the Head of the House, and by the matrons as a blessing of protection over their own children. This was before I went to Hogwarts and was disowned after being sorted into Gryffindor. They sealed the vaults up after that so I couldn't enter them anymore, well,

at least until my mother passes away, then I became the Head of the Black Family and can enter all the family vaults again."

"Sure Sirius, we would be an honor to have you give Harry a blessing like that. Are you sure you should do it? I mean it is from your personal family's archive. Usually those are meant only for family or heirs."

"I know, but this charm hasn't been used in my family for hundreds or maybe even a thousand years, since they turned their back on the 'light' side."

"The blessing is: meum affectus serpire thee ex noceo ac ex mortis."

"It means: May my love protect you from harm and from death."

"Like you said, it is usually meant for family or when the head of the family selects his heir. Most of the times it is the mothers that would pronounce the charm or blessing on the child. Now, can you see anyone of the Blacks stating something like that on their child? I mean we're talking about Cissy Malfoy and Bella Lestranger here. Well, Andy might do something like that over Nym, but like I said, this hasn't been used in several hundreds years, so I would guess that Andy doesn't even know about it, and I think Nym's a bit too 'old' to feel comfortable having her mother running around saying this at her all day." Sirius laughed at the thought of his second cousin running around trying to get away from her mother, with her hair changing all types of colors.

"Lily, James, this is my gift and bequeath to you both and Harry. You have my permission to use this charm and blessing on Harry as much as you would like. They say that the protection grows in strength over time the more times you use it."

"Sirius, I don't know what to say." Lily said in a shocked voice. Being a charms mistress she realized the importance of an old family charm such as this one and was humbled that Sirius would be so thoughtful and allow it to be included in the Potter family archives. She never knew that Sirius could be so - 'serious'.

"That's OK," Sirius said, "This way I won't feel so bad when I give him his first broom!"

"Sirius Black! You better not even think about getting a broom until he's at least 8 years old! I will not have you endangering my son like that!" Lily shouted out.

"But don't you see that is what the charm is for. If you do the charm properly, there will be nothing to worry about!" Sirius was only half 'serious' at this time, but he did have a reputation to uphold, and he wasn't going to let Lily relax just yet. "Besides, what would I do with this bag of toys that I have for Harry now?" Asked Sirius with a serious look on his face, holding up a magically shrunk bag of toys.

"There better not be a broomstick in that bag Mr. Black, or you might end up being the last of the Black line!" Lily stated.

"Then it's a good thing then that I have already selected by heir then isn't it Lily."

"You couldn't have meant that! Besides, I'm sure that sooner or later there will be someone who will drag your sorry butt to the alter."

"I know Lil. I'm just not ready to settle down yet. You have to remember, this is the closest I've gotten to a baby since Nym was born six years ago – and then Andy wouldn't let me hold her."

Sirius looked down as Harry slept. He couldn't help but feel drawn to the little man. 'He's so much like James. But I'll almost bet he has Lily's heart. I hope James realizes how lucky he is to have Lily and Harry.' Sirius thought.

Just then Harry started moving his mouth with a small sucking movement. Not really opening his mouth, just moving his mouth up and down. Sirius took one of his fingers to feel down one of Harry's cheeks to see how soft they were. As soon as Harry felt the finger, he opened his eyes and turned his head trying to catch Sirius' finger, and started to suck on it.

"Whoa little buddy, wrong equipment... My lands! Look at those eyes! James, he may have your hair, but he definitely has Lily's eyes! Here Lily, I think he wants some breakfast. Come on James let's step out for a second and give them some privacy."

"Ah, no thanks Padfoot. Now you know one of the advantages of being the father – I get to stick around for feeding time." Teased James.

"Oh go with him James, or else we'll show him another one of the privileges of being the father – when you change your son's first diaper!" Lily threatened.

Padfoot laughed, as he and James made a hasty retreat.

Scene – Lord Voldemort's current headquarters

A short, rotund young man shackle enters his lord's throne room.

"M. My Lo. Lord, I bring you the news you were waiting for." He hurries forward to kneel and kiss the hem of his master's robe.

"Well, Wormtail, what is it? I haven't got all day you know." Stated Lord Voldemort coldly.

"N. No my Lo. Lord. It is regarding the Potter's and the Longbottom's my Lord. Both women have delivered baby boys m. my Lor. Lord. Neville Franklin Longbottom was born at 10:30 AM on July 30th, while Harry James P. Potter was born just after midnight on July 31st. There are no other births planed for the remainder of the day." Peter Pettigrew took a deep breath having delivered is message to Lord Voldemort without getting cursed.

"So, they have finally delivered their baby's? Why does it have to be those two? They are a constant pain in my side. Catching my followers, interrupting my raiding party and recruitment meetings. How is it that they seem to be the first two to almost every sight? Would you like to answer that question Wormtail?"

Wormtail started shacking. "N. No my Lord! I have told them nothing! They do not know that I have sworn allegiance to you and serve you the best I can. They continue to ignore me, and have belittled me for too long thinking that I should be honored to be in their mere presents. I want only to serve you, both against them, and against the Order of the Phoenix!"

"Yes, Wormtail, I know why you are here. Power. Pure and simple. But you must remember that you must earn the right to have such power. But I digress. Tell me Wormtail, if you were to analyze what we know of the prophecy, which one of these children would you say

was the one 'born as the seventh month dies'." Asked Voldemort as he gently tapped his wand in his hand.

"W. Well, my Lord, I would have to say the one that is born closet to the end of the month?" Wormtail stated unsure as to what to say.

"Very good Wormtail!" Voldemort said condescendingly. "Now I want you to get back to your 'friends' and keep a close eye on them. See if you can continue to sow seeds of doubt in their minds regarding their werewolf friend, and see if you can get closer to the Longbottom family if you can. I must know when they come out in the open so we can eliminate them. Especially their young son Harry."

"The Longbottom boy will be taken care of also, but I feel that I have to take care of the Potters personally." Voldemort laughed as he thought of taking out this stumbling block on his path to immortality.

"You may go now Wormtail, but first, before you go, let me remind you what will happen if you fail... CRUCIO!"

Scene – Godric's Hollow

Lily and James were glad to be home. They had been so overwhelmed, and full of joy that for a few days they had forgotten all about the prophecy. But all too soon, the reality of the prophecy, and Lily's own premonition started to hit home. For her part, every time Lily went to pick up Harry she would recite the blessing she had been given by Sirius (meum affectus serpire thee ex noceo ac ex mortis - May my love protect you from harm and from death.) with all the feeling she had in her heart. Every time she would do this, she would get a warm feeling in her heart. A feeling of peace and contentment came over her; she felt happy.

One evening after Harry had been put to bed, while James and Lily were sitting in front of the fireplace, Lily broached the subject again with James. "James, I'm scared." Was all Lily said.

"I know sweetheart. I am too. But I just don't know what else to do. We have the wizarding lawyers getting everything set up legally, we have the goblins at Gringotts setting up the Family account and Harry's trust fund, we're still have to select which of our friend we

think would be the best for the secret keeper for the Fidelius Charm, I mean, what else can we do?"

"I have one more thing, well, two more things really. As you know I have been working on charms and rituals to help the Aurors learn faster, and be stronger don't you?"

"Yes, I remember you telling me about them. But I thought you said the Ministry rejected them because they were considered 'Dark Magic' because of the blood required. I also thought you stated that the results were only temporary unless the witch or wizard worked hard to keep it up for a full lunar month."

"Yes, you're right on both counts. And here I thought you didn't listen to me when I talked to you about work."

"Hey, just because you don't get a verbal response from me doesn't mean I'm not listening. It just means... I'm not listening very well. But this was all you talked about for the last four months, so something had to stick." James tried to defend himself.

"Don't worry honey, I still love you. But I think I have found a way around the problem."

"It a couple of charm, like the one that Sirius gave to us. It can be used over and over again, and has a compounding influence. The only shortcoming that I have come across in them is that it is most effective during a new moon. It's during a new moon that our minds are more open to shaping new ideas. It is when we are most predisposed to receive new information and new energy. It is a time of purity. You can look at it as a time of starting a new project. The other shortcoming is that it has to be done before the individual reaches their magical maturity, so it wouldn't be of any value to the Aurors."

"Well, it sounds pretty good so far. Is it very hard, or very difficult?" James asked.

"No, it's not that hard at all, and as far as I can tell there is no risk to harming Harry at all."

"The incantations are: exporrigo magus umbilicus to expand the magical core, and exporrigo affectio meminisse to expand the mind."

The body will not let the magical core expand beyond what it is capable of. I think we can start trying to expand Harry's magical core as soon as next new moon on August 10th. I know Harry will only be a few weeks old, but like I said, this will not harm him in any way."

"I would suggest only using the magical core charm on Harry until he is at least one year old, so that his mind can develop normally and become more stable."

James still looked a little bit worried. "I know honey, but... do we even know if he is magical or not?" There was a great deal of fear and trepidation in James' voice as he said it. As far as the family records were concerned, there had never been a squib in the Potter line, but there was always a first time, and it seemed that the rate of squib's born to pure-blood families was increasing at an alarming rate.

"Well, you happen to be in luck then dear." Lily said. "This is why it's good to have a wife that worked in the Department of Mysteries. There happens to be a simple spell, *magnitudo de magica* that is used in the department to see if someone is magical or not. Depending on how a person rates on the magic scale determines how your rank."

"When measuring an adult we basically, follow a simple scale:

Lower limit - Upper limit-Classification

0 – 50 - Squib

51 – 100 - A Squib that may have psychic abilities (Mr. Filch rates a 90)

101 – 500 - A Low power Wizard

501 – 1,500 - A Standard power Wizard

1,501 – 3,000 - A High power Wizard

3,001 – 5,000 - A Low Sorcerer

5,001 – 7,500 - A Sorcerer

7,501 – 10,500 - A Grand Sorcerer

10,501 – 15,000 - Mage

15,001 – And above - An Arch Mage

"Of course, this doesn't take into account any special abilities that the person might have like animagus, metamorphmagus, seer, elemental, or others."

"For children, we simply divide the number in the table by 20 to give a general indication to see if they are a squib or not, so, what we're looking for as a number over 5 for a newborn. That would indicate that you could expect a low powered wizard by the time he entered into Hogwarts. The basic Arithmancy equation is (Base power Rate plus ((Base power Rate times 2) times (number of years of the child)) = Current power rating. This also lets you know when to expect your child to start doing accidental magic."

"Let's say that Harry has an initial base power rating of 15, then, at age 3 his power rating would be 105 and we could expect to see some accidental magic after that. By the time he enters Hogwarts at age 11 his power rating would be about 345. That would mean he would be strong enough to do the simple spell like Wingardium Leviosa which requires someone with at least a power rating of 110 to perform it."

"After Harry enters Hogwarts, it will be harder to compute his power rating. This is because now he will be 'exercising' his magical 'muscle', but let's say that he just progresses at the same rate. That would mean that when he is 17 would be 525. But you know that at 17 you also receive your magical maturity, essentially doubling your magical core's size and power from 525 to 1,050. Close to the middle of the Standard Wizard's power chart."

"After a person has gone through his or her magical maturity, it is much harder to expand the size of the magical core without using rituals like Anthrokrak."

James really did love his wife. But sometimes when she got into one of her 'lecture modes' it was hard to stay awake. He did find it fascinating that there was a 'ranking' system for how powerful a witch or wizard was, and he was even a little curious as to how

powerful he and Lily were, but what he had ask was about the two new charms Lily was proposing to perform on Harry. How would that influence him?

"Dear? Honey? Stop... stop for a minute. All of this is fascinating, but how does that affect what you were talking about doing to Harry?"

"Well, since the magical core is more pliable before the child goes through his magical maturity, there is a good possibility that we could influence the size of Harry's core and his mental capacity, to where he could end up as a Grand Sorcerer, or even a Mage!"

"Think about it James. If Voldemort does get his hands on the Cauldrons of Chaos, he won't hesitate to uses the ritual to increase the size of his magical core and even though you waste about two thirds of the added core in the power transfer, he still has the chance to be totally off the chart as far as power goes. He'll be the most powerful wizard since Merlin!"

"Let's say that Voldemort lets five of his inner circle goes through the Rite of Anthrokrak five times. Let's assume that those in the inner circle are already on the upper end of power of a High Wizard (3,000) and he allows them to bond with five other wizards of similar power. Even if they only increase their power by 1,000 points per transfer, that still puts the five inner circle wizards at around 8,000 – that's in the Grand Sorcerer range!"

"It is assumed in the Department of Mysteries that Voldemort already has a power rating between 8,000 and 9,000. If he were to add five additional cores of about 2,600 each... well, you can see, we wouldn't stand a chance. The only reason Voldemort is afraid of Professor Dumbledore is because of his skill in transfiguration, dueling, and as a Grand Sorcerer he does pack quite a punch."

"Okay, but now you have me wondering, what is my power rating, and for that matter, what is yours?" James asked.

"Well, why don't you put Harry down and stand in the center of the room so that I can get a clear shot at you."

James did as he was told, as Lily took out her wand. When he was in position, she gave a small twist of the wrist, and a 'poke' straight

at James while giving the incantation "magnitudo de magica!" Above James' head appeared a smoke sigh with the numbers '2,780' floating in the middle of it. "Not bad. That puts you in the High Wizard's category. Now, did you see what I did? Do the same thing to me."

James repeated the hand motion and the incantation while pointing his wand at Lily. The same smoke sigh appeared over her head with the numbers '2,950' floating in the middle of it.

"That can't be right!" James said almost under his breath.

"Just because I have a higher number then you doesn't mean that I could beat you in a duel." Lily reminded him. She was smirking just a little seeing that her number was higher then his. "You still have more combat training than I have."

"Yes, but you just sit around all day thinking up newer and better ways of hurting people. I don't think I would like to be on the receiving end on one of those new curses." James said in defeat.

"Okay, enough of this. Why don't you test Harry now? We didn't have a chance to do this since we were at a Muggle hospital." James said.

It was common knowledge in the Department of Mysteries that most new born babies were coming in with an initial power rating of 40 and below. Lily had looked through some of the historical records to see if the trend was heading up or down. She was quite shocked to see that since the mid 1940's the power rating of new born's was down dramatically.

James and Lily stood in front of Harry while he rested on the couch. Once again Lily took her wand and wave it in its pattern while saying the incantation. "magnitudo de magica."

"No, no, no, this can't be right." Lily said. She tried the spell again, and got the same results.

"James, you try the spell. I must be doing something wrong."

James took out his wand and repeated the incantation for the third time over the sleeping baby.

'130' was clearly seen in the screen of smoke.

"What does that mean Lily?" James asked.

Lily took a few moments to try to phrase this in a way that wouldn't scare her husband.

"Let's just say that you are not to leave your wand lying around any where. Harry already has the magical power to do a Wingardium Leviosa, and will probably be able to Accio things that are small and close to him."

"If my calculations are correct, Harry will be entering Hogwarts with a power rating of $(130 \text{ plus } ((130 \text{ times } 2) \text{ times } 11)) = 2,990$! That puts him in the High Wizard range – he'll have more raw power than me when he enters! He may be the first wizard in over one hundred years to graduate from Hogwarts as a Grand Sorcerer!"

"Who was the last one to do that dear?" James asked.

"Why, Albus Dumbledore, of course." Came Lily's reply.

"What about Voldemort? I thought you said he is currently at a Grand Sorcerer or Mage power level?"

"That may be true. No one has been able to directly measure his power level for a long time. But it is thought that most of his power increase is due to all of the dark rituals that he has performed on himself."

"I have a question though. It seems that most of the reports that come in from St. Mungo's on the new babies, have a power rating of 20 to 50. Do you think that they could be putting on a 'block' on the baby's power core so that they don't grow too fast or do as much accidental magic?" Lily wondered.

"Without the parent's consent! That... that would be criminal!" James spouted.

"Look at it from the Ministry's point of view. If you don't have a strong wizard, you have less chance of them overpowering the law enforcement or becoming the next dark wizard. I'm sure the power

block comes off the child before their 17th birthday, but by that time the damage is already done!"

"I'll bet that if more information were known about Voldemort, you would find out that he wasn't born in the 'magical' community, but rather in a muggle setting so no record of his initial power rating was ever recorded, and the ministry didn't have an opportunity to put a power block on him. By the time he entered Hogwarts, or whatever school he went to, he would have already been at a wizard or high wizard power rating. Now wonder he's so powerful."

"This also means that we can expect a visit from a mediwitch from St. Mungo's sometime soon to 'check-up' on Harry, and put a power block on him! James, we can't let that happen! If Harry is the child of the prophecy, he will need every advantage he can get!" By now Lily was getting quite frantic.

James walked over to her and took her in loving embrace. "Don't worry honey; nothing is going to happen to our Harry. We probably have a little bit of time to come up with a charm, or an amulet that will protect Harry's magical core. Failing that, we'll come up with a charm to get rid of the block as quickly as possible."

Lily fell comfortable into her husband's arms feeling safe and secure.

Several days later, just as Lily was putting Harry down for a nap, she received a floo-call from St. Mungo's.

"Hello there Mrs. Potter, my name is Healer Patterson. Our records indicate that you recently gave birth to a baby in a muggle hospital. Is that correct?"

"Hello Healer Patterson. Yes that is correct. Would you like to come through now? I just put Harry down for a nap."

"Oh, I can check him while he is asleep," she said after stepping through the floo. "Do you have the birthing information from the muggle hospital? I should be able to get most of the information I need from those documents. Then I just run a few test to see how he is doing."

"Yes, I'll have my husband get that information for you. James! Could you bring Harry's birthing information in here for Healer Patterson?" Lily yelled out.

"Be there in a minute!" came the reply.

Healer Patterson started running her test on Harry by passing her wand over him while muttering different incantations.

"That is certainly a lovely amulet Harry has around his neck. Is that a family heirloom?"

"Yes it is." Lily answered, "It's for protection."

"It seems to be interfering with some of my diagnostic spells. Do you mind if I take it off?"

"Why don't we wait for my husband, so that he can make sure he takes it off correctly without hurting you or my son?" Lily responded.

Just then James came in with all the paper work from the Muggle hospital, and was introduced to Healer Patterson.

"Okay, Healer Patterson, why don't we start with copying this information?"

With a swish of her wand the information was copied, and transferred to her documents. She didn't even see James take out his wand, or hear the curse "Stupefy".

Healer Patterson slumped down onto the couch. James ran over and took out a vial of clear liquid and tipping her head back, administered 3 drops to the stunned healer.

"You know I could lose my job over this." James told his wife.

"I know, but I have to know if they plan to block Harry's Magical Core." Lily said.

James wakes up the healer with "Rennervate" and then places her in a full body bind so that she cannot run away. As she comes around, she is a bit surprised to see that she has been stunned. Lily takes care of the questioning.

"What are the nature of the spells you were casting on my son?"

"Most of them are just standard spells to check height, weight, and general health of the baby."

"What are the remaining spells you were trying to cast on my son?" Lily asked with a bit more 'bite' in her voice.

The healer tried not to answer the question, but could not resist against the Veritaserum.

"It is a base-line power spell. If an infant has a base-line reading above 40, we are to place a power block on them to reduce it by one half. The spell is designed to decay over time after the child reaches 11 years old, and is completely gone by their 17th birthday." She answered.

"The other is a marker type spell that shows that the witch or wizard has been tested."

"WHOSE BLOODY BRILLIANT IDEA WAS THIS?" Lily screamed.

"As I understand it, the Ministry put it into place at Professor Albus Dumbledore's request after He-who-must-not-be-named first rise to power five years ago, but it was a common practice much before then, the only difference is that the base-line reading had to be above 100 before a power block was placed on an infant."

"That's why all of the older Aurors kick the young guy's butt during training." James stated. "It's not just their experience; their cores haven't been blocked during their formative years."

"That may also explain why my power level was higher than yours. I may not have had my core blocked, but I also didn't 'exercise' it for the first eleven years." Said Lily.

James stunned the healer again and administered the Veritaserum antidote. He then removed the bindings, revived her and obliterated her memory of the stunning, binding, the Veritaserum and the Obliviate charm.

"Okay, this is what you are going to do. You will write down that you tested my son, and that he rated a 39 on the scale so no core block is required. You will then cast the marking charm on him to show that he has been tested. You will not remember anything else; you will only remember putting the charm on him. As far as you remember, everything went routinely here."

The healer was coming around just as Lily was conjuring some tea and biscuits to eat.

"Thank you for coming to our home and taking care of this. Are you sure you wouldn't like to rest for a bit and have some tea?" Lily asked, being the perfect host.

"No, thank you I really must be on my way. I must say, you have an adorable son there Mrs. Potter, Mr. Potter."

"Thank you." They both said smiling. And with that the Healer walked back to the fireplace and was gone.

The smiles immediately faded from Lily and James' face.

"So it was Albus' idea to put a block on all the children." James thought out loud. "I'm sure he did it for the 'greater good' as he always says."

"You do realize that if we were able to figure this out, others have also."

"What? And that relates to us... how?" James asked.

"How many of Voldemort's followers would do what we just did if they were aware of the power block? Probably every single one of them! When these children grow up and enter into Voldemort's service, who do you think will have the advantage in a fire fight? They will!"

"James, we have to do everything we can to give Harry a fighting chance. Expanding his magical core; expanding his mind and mental capacity, anything that we can do, so that when we aren't here to teach and train him, he will still be able to survive and win against the odds!" Lily was very passionate in her arguments.

James was still not 'at ease' with Lily's premonition with regards to they early demise, but he recognized that they had to treat every day as if it were their last and prepare Harry accordingly.

"Lil, okay, I agree with you. But we need to do more then just expanding the magical and mental centers. We have to make sure there is something to put in there once they are expanded. I am going to get some of the house elves working on making a copy of all of the textbooks we had when we went to Hogwarts. I think I have an old copy of the Auror's training guide that can be included, and several other DADA and transfiguration books that he should have. I will also make sure that Harry has a copy of the journal the Marauders wrote when we were there."

Lily was about to object. She did not want her son to be preoccupied with pranks and such. But James stopped her.

"Now Lily, there's a lot more in there then just the pranks we pulled off. It also includes all of the errors we made in our animagus training, how we made the Marauders map and the different paths in and out of Hogwarts, and the location of all of the entrances to the four houses common rooms. This could be very helpful in helping him get out of trouble at Hogwarts!" James argued.

"Okay, but I get to write a letter that will be put in the front of the book," was Lily's reply. "And while we are at it, I can include my extra charms and potions books along with the Unspeakables handbook."

"I would also like to include some history books in this selection, so he can learn some lessons from the past." Lily said.

"Fine, but please, not 'Hogwarts, a History' we don't want him scared for life now." James joked. Lily just hit him on his shoulder and finished making a list of books that she thought would be helpful to Harry in the coming years.

End Chapter 4

Chapter 5 – Planning and Preparation

Over the next few days and weeks, James and Lily were busy making all the legal arrangements, gathering books and training items that Harry would need as he was growing up.

Suddenly, Lily stopped what she was doing and turned to James.

"James? What do we do with this information about the magical blocks on the children?"

"What do you mean Lil?"

"I mean I'm Neville's Godmother. Don't I owe it to him to make sure his block is removed also?"

"Lily, I don't know. I mean, on the one hand yes you do owe it to Neville and Alice and Frank to let them know what the Ministry and Dumbledore are doing. On the other hand, if we let this information out, there is a greater chance of it getting back to the Ministry, causing an investigation, and very likely your and my job. Not to mention a stint at Azkaban. I'm afraid the only course of action we have right now is to obliviate ourselves with regards to the power block..."

"NO, James I can't do that!" Lily screamed.

"Lily... Lily! Wait a minute! Hear me out!" James got up and went over to his wife.

"Lily! There is no other way right now!" He said. "I'm not saying that we obliviate ourselves right now, but before either of us go back to work, we are going to have to erase all indication of what we have been doing, and the information regarding the power block from both of our minds!"

Lily was still shaking her head no and starting to cry thinking about Neville and all of the other children that had had this power block put on their magical core over the last five years or so that had been handicapped due to the Ministry's short sightedness. Lily was thinking that if they acted quickly they could reduce the potential damage to those children as they grew up, but she also knew that there was no way of convincing Professor Dumbledore of going

back to the Ministry and having them admit that they were the ones responsible for having the power blocks on the children in the first place.

"What are we going to do James?" Lily asked through her tears.

"I'm not sure hon, but you're a charms mistress, so maybe you could find a charm that would identify the power block, and an other one to remove the block. If we can't do it on the sly with Neville, and maybe some other children, we could at least include the information with Harry's stuff and tell him how to take the blocks off when he is older. But it has to be done while we are on maternity leave All of this information has to be removed from our mind before we get around all of those people in the Department of Mysteries or the DMLE. I know you can occlude your mind, but don't forget that there will always be someone stronger then you and you don't know when or where you will meet that person."

Lily had started to calm down by now. She knew that James was right, but that didn't mean that she had to like it. It was clear that her first course of business was to come up with a power block detection spell, and then see if she could come up with a counter spell for it. It was very doubtful that the all-purpose Finite Incantatem would work on something like this.

After several days of writing down everything that they could think of that Harry might need growing up, Lily again stopped and turned to ask the question that had been plaguing mankind for at least the last 72 hours.

"James, where are we going to put all of this 'stuff' in? I can see where we will probable have enough to fill a good size library by the time we get all of these manuals together. I would have to be something small enough for Harry to carry around without being observed, yet be able to carry all of these manual, books and things."

"I'm glad you ask that hon.," James answered with a sad smile on his face. He then took out a small box out of his pocket, and placed it on the floor.

"Expandere" he said quietly, while his hand was on the box.

In the next moment a beautiful custom-made travel trunk was standing next to him.

"Oh James, that's beautiful, where did it come from?" Lily asked.

"This was a trunk my father had made special for our family when Voldemort first came to power about 5 years ago. Voldemort approached father knowing our feelings about blood purity and muggles. He felt that if he could get a 'light' family to his side early in his labors, it would bring a lot of the other families in line. Of course father refused him out-right, and Voldemort made him one of the first examples of what would happen to a pure-blood family that refused Voldemort's 'offer' to join him."

"It was during my 5th year at Hogwarts that Voldemort attacked and killed my mother and father. It wasn't until I had graduated from Hogwarts and went to commission my own special trunk that I found this one. The trunk maker apologized to me for not having it done sooner; it appears that he finished the trunk the same day my parents were killed."

"I took the trunk and held on to it as a remembrance of my parents. I've never planned on using it. But I think this might just be the thing that we need to put everything in for Harry."

"Let me show you around the trunk, and you can tell me what you think." stated James.

"This is a nine chamber trunk. It can be charmed to look like a standard size traveling trunk, and with a few more charms it can be made to look like a standard Hogwarts student's trunk."

"In the first chamber you will find what looks like a standard clothes rack and drawers. But the space inside is practically endless, and will allow the user to store an unlimited amount of clothes in it.

To get a desired item from the clothes rack, you just have to think of the style or outfit you want to wear, and the trunk will bring it to the front of the chamber. It's like each person having their own walk-in closet, and a personal valet to dress you each morning. The same thing with the drawers, you can put as much as you want in to the drawers and they will sort themselves."

"The garments and other items in the drawers are kept clean and in good repair by a self-cleaning / repairing spell when you return the items back into the drawer or closet."

"The second chamber is where 'school supplies' are kept. This would be book, parchment, quails, brooms, and so forth that Harry would need while at school. There is also a 'port' on one of the bookshelves where a request can be made regarding a resource book, and if that resource book is in the trunk's Library, it will be returned to this bookshelf. To return the Library book, just set the book back on the shelf, and say 'Return' as you touch the shelf with your wand."

"The third chamber is the main library and study hall." When James opened the third chamber, Lily was surprised to see a small archway expand out of the trunk inviting them to enter. "This can be keyed to where only those who have been granted access can see the arch. It will be important to make sure Harry knows that he has to be careful in how he uses some of these different chambers so that it does not draw too much attention to him or else it could appear that he just 'disappears' when he enters some of these rooms."

As Lily and James entered this chamber, it was as if they had entered a room that looked a great deal like the library at Hogwarts – with the exception that it was about ten times larger. At the front of the library, where the librarian's check-out desk would be was a pedestal with a large tome on it. Two small book carts were on either side of the pedestal.

"The Potters have always encouraged the need for constant learning, and as such have an extensive library of books covering almost all subjects, even some of the now called 'Darker' subjects. It seems that my predecessors felt that it was the 'intent' behind the spell, and not the spell or charm itself that made something 'Dark'. I have been thinking that I should probably go down to Gringotts and get ALL the books and scrolls copied and put them in here, in case someone gets into the vault before Harry, and removes some of the more 'interesting' items." James said.

"That's a good idea honey, I have some potion, charms, and Arithmancy books and scrolls that would be hard to replace. I should probably place them in there as well. I still have my notes that I used with Severus when we came up with wolfsbane potion. I'm not upset

that he took all the credit for improving the potion, but I still think there are a few things that could have been done differently to make it even more effective."

"That would probable be a good thing hon. I just hope Harry has your love of reading and learning and not mine."

Turning to the pedestal, James pointed to the large tome.

"If you have a new book or scroll that you want 'checked into' the library, you will place it on one of these carts, touch the book or scroll with your wand, and then touch the master book while saying 'addo carta' (add book). The master book – or master index, is charmed to scan through the book or scroll being added, and cross referencing it with all the other books and scrolls in the library. This will also include any text that may be hidden or encrypted in the volume.

If the master book does not understand the language or encryption to begin with, it will make note of it, and continue working on the problem until it learns it. After the master book has classified the scroll or book, it will file it in the most appropriate main subject area in the library."

"To get a specific book from the library, you can go and look for it (not recommended unless you know right where to go and want the exercise), or you can touch the master book with your wand and say 'accire carta' followed by the name of the book (fetch book [book name])."

"If you do want to go to the location of the book in the library, you can say 'positus carta' and then the name of the book you are looking for. A map will appear on the cover of the master book to show where you are and where the book is."

"If you want to search a subject, you can say 'accire subjunctus pri' then the subject name. This will return just the books and scrolls that contain basic information on the subject; for more advanced information, 'accire subjunctus aggredior' then the subject name; or your could ask for everything on the subject by saying 'accire subjunctus totus' followed by the subject name. Be very careful what you ask to get EVERYTHING on, you may get more then you expect."

"To see what books are in the library, hold your hand or your wand on the master book and say 'ostendo' and then the subject name. Then open the master book to the first page and a list of all of the books relating to that subject will be shown. When you see the book you want, place your finger or wand on the entry and say 'accire carta'. The master book will know which book you are referring to and will retrieve that book."

"If you want a summary of the book, say 'collectionis' and the book entry will expand to include a summary of the books / or scrolls content.

If you get more books and scrolls then you need, or you want to return to the beginning of the master book to start a new search, simply put the extra books on the carts, touch your wand or your hand on the master book and say 'Return'.

Lily was thrilled at the extent of the library system, and what it could hold. Her eyes were going wide, and she was looking like a little schoolgirl again with a new toy.

"Why didn't you show me this before? It would have helped in some of my research a great deal."

"Lily, I meant this to be a memorial to my parents. I never thought about it until you asked where we were going to put all this stuff."

"Oh, sorry dear, I forgot what this represented to you."

"That's okay hon, no harm done, but we do have to move along, there's quite a bit more to see."

"This next chamber is for physical and magical training. You can see that there is a track to run around, mats to practice falling and tumbling, some free weights for lifting, and a dueling platform with training dummies that can be programmed from beginner level through senior Auror, hit wizard, unspeakable special agent, and assassin. When ever you step onto the dueling platform, a protective dome will be activated protecting the rest of the contents or people in the room."

"The last object over at the edge of the room is a Power Meter Target trap. This has two modes: stationary, and mobile. In its stationary mode, this trap will measure the strength of the spell, hex, jinks, or charm that hits it, with the exception of the unforgivable spells."

"In mobile mode, it tests for strength and accuracy, so you will see two scores above the box; the first one will be the power rating of the spell with a rating from 1 to 99,999. The next will be a percentage of contact with a range from 1 percent to 100 percent."

"It can also act as a training probe that can fire back stinging hexes just to make sure you are staying alert. To stay on the safe side, the stinging hex will never be powered above 350. That is still enough to raise a welt, and hopefully, get your attention. There are a total of ten of these traps in the training room, not that I think anyone could go against more than three on their highest setting, but more than one person can train at a time."

"This next chamber is my favorite, and also the chamber that causes me the most pain. Close your eyes as we go through the portal."

Lily wasn't too thrilled about closing her eyes as James led her through to the next chamber. She didn't want to be pranked in the middle of this tour.

"Okay, you're in the next room. Open your eyes now."

Lily peeked through one eye not knowing what to expect. What she saw took her breath away.

They were currently standing in the foyer of a grand manor.

Directly in front of them was a spiral staircase that led up to the main living/sleeping quarters. Directly behind the staircase was the entrance to the Grand room that opened out to a veranda. While still in the foyer, on your right was the formal dining area and a training area behind and to the side of the room. On the left side of the foyer was an office / den, and another training area.

Just past the spiral staircase on the right was the kitchen, informal dining area, living room, and a breakfast / morning nook.

Off the left of the spiral staircase was one of the two Master bedroom suites.

Upstairs held the second Master bedroom suite, and eight additional bedrooms, each with their own walk in closets, and full bathrooms. There was also a galley that looked over the Grand room, a Library, main training area, and a muggle game room.

Everything was fully furnished, and functional.

Lily couldn't believe her eyes. "Why haven't I been shown this before?" she asked.

James blushed and hung his head as he answered. "This is a replica of one of the Potter manors in upper Scotland. This is where I grew up, and I had hoped one day to be able to take you there and fill all those rooms with then next generations of Potters."

"Well, what's keeping you from doing that?" asked Lily.

"This is where Voldemort attacked and killed my parents. He leveled the manor to the ground." Was all James said, his eyes filling with tears as the memory of that day hit him full force. This was the main reason he had not used the trunk before. The pain was still there, it felt like his heart was breaking, it was more then he could stand. Lily could see the sadness in his eyes, and feel the pain in his heart. He became the last of the Potters' that day, and he did not like dwelling on it.

Lily took James into a kind and loving embrace and said, "I'm sorry honey. I didn't mean to open that old wound. It's just that the home is so beautiful... I would love to live in it now... if it didn't bring so many bad memories up for you." Lily turned him slowly to face her, and looked him straight in the eyes and said: "With all my heart, with all my soul, I love you and will stand by you to give you support whenever you are feeling down. This may not be our home, but I promise you that I will do everything that I can to see that Harry fulfills your dream of filling this house, and the one in Scotland with the next generation of Potters."

Lily then leaned forward and gentle kissed James as tenderly and lovingly as she could. No other words were spoken. There was no

need for that. James knew that this woman in front of him could see him through all the trials of the coming days.

After a few moments, James regained his composure, and suggested they finish the tour of the trunk.

Chamber 6 was set up to be a Potions area, and if needs be an infirmary.

There were a total of ten potion stations; so many things could be going on at once. The storage area for the raw materials was immense, and the area for the finished product was lined with wall-to-wall stasis cabinets, so that the potions would not go bad after being brewed.

Lily again started to act like a kid in the candy store. It was true that she had tested out to be a charms mistress, but she could have just as easily tested to be a potions mistress as well. She had been one of the top two students in the potions class – the other one being Severus Snape. She and Severus actually got along quite well, until he asked her to a Hogsmeade weekend, but she had already committed to go with James. After that, Severus would avoid her, and started treating her as one of the Marauders.

Dragging Lily from the Potions area into chamber number 7 was quite fun for James.

Chamber 7 was a wooded glen that spread out in all directions for about a quarter of a mile in each direction.

There was a large meadow with a stream running through it. There were also trees, scrubs, and bushes to support all manner of birds and small animals.

James immediately changed into Prongs and started running around in the glen. Lily just sat back and laughed at him for a moment. She quickly joined him in her animagus form of a tigress – she was, after all, the mysterious 'Tiger Lily'. Lily didn't change into her form very often. She had only learned during her seventh year at Hogwarts and rarely used it while she was there.

Being a tigress, she was faster, and in some ways stronger than her husband, but he still had a head full of antlers that she had to look out for whenever they played 'tag'.

They couldn't spend much time there, they knew that they had to finish the tour quickly before Harry woke up from his nap, so after about 15 minutes of running around, they continued on.

Chamber 8 was set aside for the performing of rites and rituals.

Runes were drawn on all of the surfaces of the room to aid in the rite and rituals that the person was performing. One of the unique features of this room was that if you invoked the correct runes, in the proper order, time, as you knew it basically came to a stand still.

James explained some of the limitations of this room to Lily: "For every day that would pass outside of this room and this room only, one month would pass in the chamber."

"However, due to the strain that amount of compressed time would put on the human psyche, the room can only be activated for eight (8) hours in a twenty-four hour period. That would translate into ten (10) days in compressed time for each eight hours of 'normal' time. That means that for every 48 minutes on 'normal' time is the equivalent of one 24-hour day in compressed time."

"You have to plan very carefully if you were going to spend a great deal of time in there. You would have to bring in all of your own housing (a wizarding tent or other structure), food, clothes, books, and toiletries, everything you would need. But the house-elves seem to be able to travel between 'normal' time and 'compressed' time without any ill effects, so they can always bring you what you forgot. Or, of course you could end the time suspension ritual at any time."

"There are two sets of clocks and calendars in the chamber to tell the person inside what the actual time and date was outside of the chamber, and when they were to wake up, eat, and go to sleep."

"While you were in the chamber, you will age at the 'normal' time rate, and not the 'compress' time rate."

"Here is the book that is restricted to the ritual chamber – it can not be taken out of the room, that explained all the runes, along with the

rites, and rituals that could be performed while in there. Now let's go on and finish the tour."

The last chamber (number 9) was just an empty room that was again about one quarter of a mile in all directions. This was meant for future growth and expansion, or other development that may arise.

Anything could be put down here. With the right supplies, you could install a greenhouse to grow your own food, or potion plants. You could use it as a place to fly a broom to help alleviate boredom (but you could do that in the forest glen area or in the quidditch field behind that manor). You could even put in holding cells if you so desired. This was a general purpose room to meet what ever need you may have.

Coming out of the trunk, Lily could not believe how much forethought James' parents had put into the trunk. It would have been the perfect place to 'hide' and train during Voldemort's reign of terror. It was too bad that it wasn't completed in time, and that now, all it represented to James was the family he lost. But it would be perfect for what they had planed for Harry.

"James, how do you shrink it back down?" Lily asked.

"Normally, you would just put your hand on it and say 'deductus'. That would reduce it to the size of a deck of playing cards. But if I'm going to get it to fit into Harry's amulet; we will have to use 'deductus maximus' before we store it there."

Over the next weeks and months Lily and James were busy placing various items into the trunk for Harry. Were possible, Lily would include a hand-written note explaining the significance of the item, and how she hoped Harry would use it.

As he had discussed before, James went to his family vault, and placed a copy of all of the Potter's books and scrolls into the trunk's library.

Lily had brought anything she thought would be helpful and put it into the library also, along with potion supplies, different types and sizes of cauldrons.

The magical core expansion would take place on the days when there was a new moon. That would mean, August 10th, September 9th, October 9th, November 7th, and December 7th in 1980.

August 10th 1980 in the ritual chamber

According to the lunar charts, the new moon would begin at 7:09 PM local time.

At 7:00 PM, Lily, James and Harry all entered in to the 8th chamber in the Potter's trunk.

They place Harry on the 'Power' rune and at 7:10 PM Lily pointed her wand at Harry, and cast the magical core expansion charm: 'exporrigo magus umbilicus' (Expand the Magical center). A soft blue light encompassed Harry, and stayed visible for several minutes.

When this was done, James tested Harry's core strength 'magnitudo de magica' (size of Magic) charm, only to find that his power level was just slightly above what it was to begin with. "Lily, I think somethings wrong here." James said. "Harry's power rating has only increased about 4 percent – about what you would expect any infant's power rating to increase over the course of two weeks."

Lily looked at James for a minute and tried her own 'magnitudo de magica' charm on Harry and got the same results.

"I know I did the charm correctly," Lily started. She started to think what could have gone wrong.

After a few moments, Lily had an 'AH HA' moment.

"James, what are we doing with the 'exporrigo magus umbilicus' charm?"

"Well, as you explained it to me, we are expanding Harry's magical core size. Isn't that correct?"

"That's exactly right. But just by expanding the magical core doesn't automatically give him more power. I mean, he may absorb some power from the spell, but for the most part, he just has the potential to store more energy as his core expands." Lily said excitedly.

"In order to see what his new potential is, we need to actually measure his potential." With that she faced Harry with her wand and said: "'premetior quantiuas magus umbilicus' (Measure the size (magnitude) of the magical center)!"

After saying that a cloud formed over Harry's head with the number '143' in it.

"See James, whereas Harry only has currently a power rating of 135, he has the potential to reach 143 – That's a 10 percent increase from when he was a baby!" Lily was excited with the results.

"Okay, that's great; he has the potential for having a power rating of 143. How do we get him from 135 to 143?" came James' next question.

Again Lily went into her analyst mode to review the problem, and come up with a solution.

"As I see it, there are two possibilities. One, if Harry is in a place where there is a lot of excess magical energy, he may be able to 'absorb' it into his magical core since there is basically a magical vacuum in his core. The other possibility is that directly transfer the power to him from one of us. Let me try something."

Lily again took out her wand and pointed it at Harry.

"transcribo virtus meus donare ad thee (Copy my strength/power (or courage / bravery) from me to thee)." A soft white light came from Lily's wand and hit Harry in the chest gently. After a few seconds, the white light started to turn red indicating 'feedback' on the magic Lily was sending to Harry. When it did that, Lily released the spell.

"There now, James, please test Harry again."

"magnitudo de magica (size of Magic)!" James cried out. Again the little cloud formed over Harry's head, but this time the number read '145'.

Harry for his part was having a fun time having both parents around him. He loved seeing the pretty lights flash around him, and even though it didn't always feel pleasant, he liked seeing the light hitting

him. Of course he was too small to understand what was going on, but deep in his mind, he knew that his mother and father loved him.

This continued for the next two months. The Potter's continued to collect things and put them into the trunk for Harry. They knew that they would have to obliviate themselves to the power blocks on the other children, the amulet, and trunk from their minds before they returned to work. They would still be aware of their attempt to expand Harry's magical core, and when he was old enough, his mental capacity, but they would not have the trunk's ritual chamber to help them.

Of course they also had to be very careful not to let anyone else know what they were doing. This was especially hard with Sirius popping in almost every day to see if he could spoil his godson a little bit more. Of course James and Lily would let him play with Harry. It would free them up to gather and collect some of the different things they would need to place into the trunk. Then, at night, after Sirius had gone back home, James and Lily would remove the trunk from Harry's amulet, and place the things they had collected that day into the trunk. They would then re-shrink the trunk and place it back in Harry's amulet, and hide the amulet from muggle and magical view.

September 9th, 1980

On September 9th, the lunar calendar stated that the new moon would begin at 10:00 AM. James and Lily took Harry back into the ritual chamber (chamber 8) for his next magical core increase ritual. They decided that they would record Harry's progress.

"Okay, when he was born, he had a power rating of 130 correct?" Lily asked.

"Correct!" was James' response.

"And when we tested him two weeks later, he was at 135 right?"

"Right!"

"And after the exporrigo magus umbilicus' (Expend the magical center) charm, his potential power reserve was at 143 right?"

"You're batting a 1,000 babe!" Came James' reply.

"I've got to stop using muggle phrases around him" Lily thought.

"But after the transcribo virtus meus donare ad thee (Copy my strength/power (or courage / bravery) belonging to me to thee) the power rating was 145?"

"You got it babe." James was having far too much fun with this. It didn't help that he was playing with Harry, getting him all wound up for the ritual, and only partially listening to her.

"Come on now James, quite playing with Harry and help me out here! You're going to have him so wound up that he won't want to stay on the rune for us as we cast the charm!"

"Harry, I think your mother is jealous." James said leaning over to almost touch Harry's nose.

Harry for his part just laughed and reached up to try and grab James' glasses from off his face.

"Okay honey, I'm listening now."

"I'll bet". "Okay, according to your calculations, where should Harry be now?"

"If it is increasing at an average of 8.3 percent per month, his normal expected power rating should be around 146, but if the core expansion took, he should be around 157." James reported.

"Okay, now let's measure Harry's power rating before we start. magnitudo de magica (size of magic)!" Lily stated.

Both James and Lily were a bit surprised when the number 160 appeared over Harry's head. Harry for his part, just laughed, and kicked his legs, like it was the funniest thing he had ever seen. (Granted, a six week old cannot see very well)

"Okay, I guess by expanding his core, his is more susceptible to absorbing the ambient magic that is around us." Lily conjectured. "That's the only thing I could think of."

"Do you want to cast the charm this month James?"

"I think I do." James replied. "I also want to see about that power transfer thing."

"Okay, just be careful."

James took out his wand and took a deep breath. More than anything else he wanted this to work. Pointing his wand at Harry, James spoke the incantation: "exporrigo magus umbilicus (expand the magical center)!" Once again, a soft blue glow surrounds Harry, and lasted for several minutes.

"Now let's test him to see if the amount of magic he has had increased any: magnitudo de magica (size of magic)!" – 162 –
"Interesting. He is absorbing energy even now. Quick, check to see what his potential power reserve is!"

"premetior quantuias magus umbilicus' (Measure the size (magnitude) of the magical center)!" – 192.

"Not a bad bit of increase in his potential. Now for the last part James, use the last spell to transfer some of your strength to Harry."

"Okay Lily, here goes: transcribo virtus meus donare ad thee (Copy my strength/power (or courage / bravery) from me to thee)." Once again a soft white light emanated from the tip of James' wand and hit Harry softly in the chest. After a few moments, the color turned from white to red.

"Okay dear, that should be enough, you can stop now." Lily said. But James kept the spell on little Harry.

By now, the color had gone from red, to orange, on its way to yellow, then green.

"James, what do you think you are doing? Stop the spell NOW!" Lily was starting to get mad, and little Harry was starting to fidget around like he didn't like this any more. He was starting to whimper.

James still held his wand on Harry, having a harder time keeping the spell on him as the light went from green, to blue, to indigo, and now, dark violet.

By now Harry was crying quite hard now. Lily was beside herself and was ready to pull out her own wand to stun her soon-to-be ex-husband.

Just before Lily got her wand out, Harry lifted his little hand, and a pulse of red energy came out of his palm, heading straight for his father.

James had to duck the energy ball, and in doing so broke the power connection.

Lily ran over to Harry who was now crying uncontrollable, and scooped him up in her arms and started to comfort him.

"WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE SEVEN HELLS DO YOU THINK YOU WERE TRYING TO DO? ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL OUR SON BEFORE HE CAN EVEN SPEAK! YOU HAVE ABOUT 30 SECONDS TO SAY SOMETHING BEFORE I START KICKING YOUR BUTT FROM HERE TO SIRIUS' HOUSE WHERE YOU'LL BE SPENDING THE REST OF YOUR NATURAL DAYS!"

To say that Lily was upset was a mild understatement. Her tigress animagus starting to take over as there was a bit of a growl in her voice, and it seemed that her eyes were now yellow and silted glowing angrily at James.

"I'm sorry I didn't talk to about this before honey. But I just thought that when you did your energy transfer last month, you stopped as soon as there was any feedback on the magical stream. That does not necessarily mean that the core is at full capacity, just that it is 'full'."

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? AND WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?"

"Last month when you did the power transfer, you saw how the power rating went up after just a few moments when you stopped. What I was trying to do is expand the core even more by putting in as much energy as Harry could take."

"Magic as it was explained to me to be like different sizes of marbles and the smaller the marble, the more 'refined' the magic is and the easier to handle."

"While you are transferring energy to Harry, you are sending over nice, large round marbles into his magical core, when he gets so many of this size marble, his core tells you it is full. If more magical energy is 'added' to the core, it starts breaking down the size of the 'marbles' to a smaller diameter making the magic more refined. As the 'marbles' become smaller and more refined, there is less wasted space between the 'marbles', so, you can actually put more of the 'marbles' in to the core."

"I'm sure you've seen a jar where they ask you to count the number of items in it? Well, if you want to be accurate, you have to take into account the amount of wasted space between all the different pieces. What I was attempting to do is to make sure Harry's core wasn't just 'full', but that it was at 'full capacity' and his magic was as 'refined' as it could be – so that the 'marble' is the size of a grain of sand. 'Refined' magic should be much easier to call up and use since it is in a smaller 'size'. Do you understand? Just test him again. See if his power rating is the normal 20 percent gain that we expected."

Lily was still very upset with her husband. He should have talked to her BEFORE trying something as stupid as that. 'How much of a power increase is he expecting' she thought to herself. 'I'm the one that does research into things like this. WHAT WAS HE THINKING! Even though what he is talking about does make some sense'.

Harry for his part had stopped crying, and now was just sniffing on his mother's shoulder.

"If this power rating is less than 200 and you put my son through HELL, you will be in BIG TROUBLE!"

James could still feel the anger radiating off of Lily. It was something he didn't like to feel.

Lily put Harry down, and cast the power rating charm on him: "magnitudo de magica (size of magic)!"

Instead of the 192, or even 200 that Lily had expected, what she saw was – 283 – a full 75 percent increase over his previous reading.

Lily was shocked. It be honest, so was James.

Lily just stood there thinking about the power increase Harry had just experienced. It had been very uncomfortable, but maybe it was worth it.

With Lily was still in shock from Harry's power increase, James slipped over and scooped up little Harry in his arms.

"I hope your not too mad at me little guy. I didn't want to hurt you, but you have to be ready for the coming trials, whatever they may be. Will you forgive me Harry?"

James didn't really expect his son to answer him, but Harry did look up into his father's eyes, and then with his little hands, he patted him firmly on his cheeks. Next he reached up and got James' glasses, and proceeded to rip them off his face, and put them in his (Harry's) mouth. But after that, he just turned his head, and rested it on his father's neck and took in a big sigh of relief like nothing had happened.

"Well, I guess that's the least I deserve from you, Harry."

Turning to his wife, James asked: "Will you forgive me too?"

Shaking her head, Lily said: "James Harold Potter! If you EVER and I do mean EVER try something like that again with out talking to me first, I may not forgive you. But just this once I will." She then came over to hug both James and Harry.

James felt relieved instantly.

"But don't think you're out of the dog-house yet. For the rest of the month, YOU get to change Harry's nappies."

October 9th, 1980

For their last time in Chamber 8 – The rites and ritual chamber, Lily was a bit sad. She remembered what had happened here, and had not been happy, but the results were unmistakable. Harry's magic was growing at a phenomenal rate.

The new moon arrived at 2:50 AM this day. Lily and James had expected Harry's power rating to be around 310 as they came into the room, but when they tested him, he was at 325!

Lily was going to take care of both the expansion spell, and the power transfer spell. It wasn't that she didn't trust James... Okay, maybe it was that she didn't quite trust James again, but if there was anything that was going to go wrong, she would rather it be her that messed it up rather than James.

It seemed like the power transfer, and core expansion had helped in Harry's growth and development also.

At three months old, he looked more like five months old; he was rocking on his hands and knees just waiting to crawl around. As it was he would rock on his belly and do a type of army crawl with his forearms, he couldn't quite figure out how to get the feet involved with it. The other way he would move around is by rolling over from front to back.

He loved to see what trouble he could get into, and always laughed out loud when his mother or father came rushing over to stop him from rolling off a couch or down the stairs.

Harry was also starting to recognize people and things.

He loved it when uncles Mooney or Padfoot showed up, but was a bit distracted when Wormtail was there.

This was the last time they would be in the trunk. Even though it was only the 9th of October, they both felt that by obliterating each other now would give their minds time to recover, and place other memories in there to where it would be difficult to tell that they had been obliterated.

Like the true researcher she was, Lily started by recording the base measurements:

"Expected power rating without core enhancement – 165."

"Observed power rating at the beginning of the session – 325.
Percentage of normal – 197 percent."

"Initiating Magical Core expansion charm: exporrigo magus umbilicus (expand the magical center)!"

"Measure the potential of the Magical Core: "premetior quantiuas magus umbilicus' (Measure the size (magnitude) of the magical center)!" – 487."

"Initiating Power transfer:" Lily swallowed hard. She know what she had to do, but didn't like it. "transcribo virtus meus donare ad thee (Copy my strength/power (or courage / bravery) from me to thee)."

Just as in months prior, the a soft white beam connected between Harry and his mother's wand, it took a little longer for the color of the beam to change, but this time when it did, Lily kept the spell going. From red, to orange, to yellow, to green, to blue, - Harry was starting to feel the discomfort of the spell now – to indigo. That's as far as Lily could take the spell. She couldn't intentional inflect pain. She quickly terminated the spell, and rushed over to pick up Harry and comfort him, and as she did, she repeated the blessing given to them from Sirius as she did every time she picked him up (meum affectus serpire thee ex noceo ac ex mortis – (May my love protect you from harm and death)).

After a few minutes, she felt James' hand on her shoulder. "Come on Honey, we have to finish the documentation."

Placing Harry back on the power rune, Lily takes back out her wand and cast the final spell: "premetior quantiuas magus umbilicus' (Measure the size (magnitude) of the magical center)!" – 612. Percentage of normal: 371 Percent."

"Okay now Lily, pick up little Harry and lets make sure every is ready to go back into Harry's amulet for the last time. Tonight, we have to obliviate ourselves regarding 1) the power block, 2) this trunk in Harry's amulet, 3) what we did to the Medi-witch when she came over to test Harry, and 4) the fact that Harry has an amulet."

"The expansion spells, measure power spell, and power transfer spell have all been added to the Potter family book of spells. As such, they do not need to be shared with the Ministry, however, we may want to share them with Frank and Alice. I mean, even if we can't tell them about the block on Neville's core, these spells should help expand his core some what."

Lily finished her notations, picked up Harry, and left the trunk for the last time.

Later that night, as James and Lily were ready to go to bed, they sat quietly facing each other.

"I hope we're doing the right things James." Lily said.

"I know, I hope we are too. Are you ready for this? Do you have all of the parameters and areas of the memory that you want erased clear in your mind? Make sure the memories are outside of your mental shields."

"Yes dear... lets just do it and get it over with!"

"Okay then, on three. One, Two, Three... OBLIVATE!" They both yelled together.

After the initial confusion, Lily and James looked at each other, and at their wands in their hands, and just shrugged their shoulders. "Good night honey, I guess I was more tired then I thought." James said.

"Ya, me too, good night dear."

Returning to work was hard for James and Lily.

All Lily thought about every day was Harry, and the prophecy that may pertain to him. James, for his part, was kept busy chasing Death-eater attacks, tracking suspected Death-eaters, and trying to catch any break he could get in finding out more information on Voldemort's organization.

Harry, for his part, spent most of the day with Sirius. Lily wasn't too happy about that, given Sirius' jovial nature, but he was one of the few people they could trust. In fact, they were thinking seriously about asking him to be their 'secret keeper' when they went under the Fidelius Charm, when everything was set up and organized.

Most of the time Sirius would have Remus Lupin with him. Remus had a hard time getting a job in the wizarding world, so, he would gain employment in the muggle world. Currently Remus was

working in a small specialty bookstore, not far from Diagon Alley. He had worked out an arrangement with the manager/owner of the store to have a 'short week' when there was a full moon for the day of the full moon, and the next two days after. This would give him time to recover before meeting the public again.

Sirius was nearly beside himself when James and Lily ask him to take care of Harry. His only concerns were, feedings, and changing the nappies. It was a good thing for Sirius that the Potter's house-elf, Sissy, helped him in those areas.

Harry was old enough to start to eat cereals, and strained fruits and vegetables, and luckily for Sirius, Lily would floo over during her breaks, and lunch to take care of the nappies, if Sissy hadn't already, so Sirius didn't have to worry about that most of the time.

What Sirius did enjoy was playing with Harry. Most of the time he would transform in to Padfoot, and play with Harry in his dog form.

Harry loved Padfoot. He would laugh at him when he changed into his animagus form; he would laugh as Padfoot brought him a toy to play with or would 'challenge' Harry for a toy by not letting go of it when Harry grabbed a toy. But most of all, Harry loved it when Sirius would hand him his bottle, then change in to Padfoot, and lay down behind him, so that Harry could lean against Padfoot, drink his bottle, and then go to sleep feeling warm and protected by HIS big, black dog.

On more than one occasion, Lily would floo over from her office to find both Harry and Padfoot sleeping together, in the middle of the floor. It looked so cute that Lily had to take several pictures of it. Of course there were those times that before the pictures were taken, Lily would have to have a bit of fun with Padfoot, by putting different color ribbons in his hair, and then take the picture. Needless to say, all of the other Marauders LOVED the pictures, but Sirius could do little about it, besides plotting evil things against Lily. He was never able to carry out any of his evil schemes though, because 1) Lily was too smart for him, and 2) James would literally KILL him if he did anything against Lily.

James and Lily did end up telling Frank, Alice, and Sirius about the core expedition spell that they had developed for Harry after swearing them to secrecy. They didn't tell them about the blockage

on Neville's core because they had obliterated that information from their minds the month before. Alice was a little bit hurt that Lily wouldn't have told them right away, but Lily explained that they wanted to be sure no harm would come to the children before raising their hopes.

On November 7th, 1980, the new moon arrived at 10:43 PM Local time. Frank and Alice watched as James once again took care of the spell. After the Potters finished their monthly ritual, they watched as Frank and Alice did the same to Neville.

"I wish there were some way to know if the spell were actually working," Alice said. "But something must be happening; I mean it took a lot longer for Harry on the core expansion spell than Neville."

"Well, you know we can always use 'magnitudo de magica' spell to see the size of the magical core. But I think we should do it in private. Not that I have anything against either of you, it's just that we've been doing this to Harry for a few months, and we don't want you to get your hopes up too high that you will have the same type of results." Lily was hoping they would understand.

"I understand what you mean. One of the business men my father has dealings with in the muggle world has an old saying: 'Past performance does not guarantee future results' or something like that." Alice said. "We might end up being jealous, or we may exceed what you have done, but you do have at least a three months head-start on us."

"Thanks for being understanding. I wasn't sure how you would have taken it." Lily concluded. "Now, over the next month, don't be afraid to do magic around Neville. It seems, at least for Harry, that the more magic he is around, the stronger he is the next time we test him. Also, remember not to let ANYONE know – especially Dumbledore. The only reason we are doing this is because either Neville or Harry is the child mentioned in that damned prophecy. They will need to have every advantage they can get if they have to go up against that monster." Frank and Alice readily agreed.

Thus ended 1980, and began 1981. James and Frank were just as busy with Death-eaters; Lily was still working away trying to find more effective and more powerful spells for the aurors to use against the Death-eaters, Alice was working as an administrator's

assistant in the Department of Mysteries, Harry was being watched by Sissy, Sirius and Remus, and Neville was being watched by his Gran.

Harry, for his part, had continued to grow and progress above the curve for children his age. At 10 months he was pulling himself up (and pulling lots of Padfoot's hair), at 11 months he was walking, and starting to talk. He could say 'Mama', and 'Papa', 'Yes', 'No', 'Prese' (Please), 'Burf' (Harry's way of barking), 'Dog', Uncle Moony, and 'Padfoot', along with a few others. It was cute to see Harry chasing Padfoot around the house saying "Dog! Burf! Burf!" as he tried to catch him. There were a few times that you could have sworn that Harry 'summoned' Padfoot to him!

When Sirius was asked about it, he said: "It felt like I was being summoned. One minute I would be running for my life, and the next minute, I was flying back towards Harry, and I would always land right in front of Harry to where he could grab both of my ears as tight as he could, pull my head towards him, and give me a big, fat kiss on the top of the head. There wasn't a thing I could do about it!

July 1st, 1981 came up and Lily noticed something on the calendar. There were two new moons in the month of July, 1981. One on July 1st at 7:03 PM, and again July 31st – a 'blue' moon, Harry's birthday, at 3:52 AM, just a few hours after he would be turning 1 year old!

Lily looked at it as a double blessing since she would be starting the memory expansion (enhancement) charm after Harry's birthday.

On the 31st of July, James and Lily had already decided to do the core expansion charm first since they were most familiar with that spell. For the first time, James wanted them to cast the spell together. James said: "Lily, instead of just casting the spell and letting it go, see what happens if we keep the spell on him, and put more power into the spell then we normally do." (Remember, they can't remember what they had done in the past.) Harry had been surrounded by soft blue light for nearly 20 minutes before it faded away. Lily had hoped that by both she and James casting the spell, the added power would decrease the time the spell had its influence on Harry.

"I don't know James. I don't want to put in too much power... but since Harry seems to be doing fine after all the other times we've

done it... Okay, let's try it. But let's talk to Harry about it first. You know he is growing up quite fast."

"I'm good with that."

"Harry, honey, I know you're tired, but can you please listen to Mommy?"

"O tay." Harry answered.

"Okay, now Harry, Mommy and Daddy are going to try to help your magic grow bigger. We are going to cast a spell on you, and you might not feel very well, but we need you to hold still please. Okay?"

"O tay." Came Harry's response.

James sat Harry on the middle of the front room floor, after all of the toys and other items had been cleared away. Then, looking over at Lily, said: "One, two, three, GO! exporrigo magus umbilicus (Expand the magical core)."

As before, a light blue beam emanated from both parent's wand but when they fell upon Harry, they formed a darker blue aura. As the parent's kept the spell up, the aura became darker and darker.

"Um, dat good Mummy!" Harry stated.

After a few minutes though, and the aura went from blue to indigo to violet. Harry said: "Ouch! Ouch! Hurts!"

As soon as Harry said that, both parents terminated the charm, and were surprised to the aura around Harry dim from violet, to indigo, to blue, to green, to yellow, to orange, to red, and finally white, and quickly faded away.

Lily ran over and scooped Harry up. "We're sorry dear we didn't mean to hurt you. How are you feeling?" She asked.

"Full!" Was all Harry would say.

"Full? What do you mean you feel full?" James asked as he rubbed Harry on the back.

"Full!" Harry relied again.

"James, don't expect to carry on much of a conversation with a one year old okay?"

"Oh! Okay."

"Are you ready for one more honey?" Lily asked softly. It was quite early in the morning, and they knew that Harry would be sleeping most of the day after this next spell. It was a good thing that the 31st of July was a Friday, James and Lily just hoped that it would be a quiet weekend.

Harry shook his head yes, so Lily sat him back down on the floor. "I think only one of us should do this charm." Lily suggested. James shook his head and agreed.

'exporrigo affectio meminisse' (Expand the mind) Lily chanted. A soft yellow light fell on Harry as his eyes opened wide, and then slowly closed and Harry settled in to a peaceful sleep.

"Because of the 're-wiring' that is occurring in Harry's brain, His nervous system has placed him into a deep sleep so that the spell can do it's work. He should sleep for most of the day. Just tell Sirius not to disturb him. Come on James, we can still get a few hours sleep before we have to go to work today."

Harry's first Birthday Party

Because Harry slept most of the day, it was decided to have his party later that evening at around 8:00 PM.

There were the Longbottom's, and the Marauders, and a few people from work to wish Neville and Harry Happy Birthday.

Flashback:

At Harry's first birthday party, it seemed the pranks were going wild.

Lily found a Forever ice rose on her plate – James looked bewildered when he saw it and ask everyone where it came from.

Remus had to keep on banishing a small wolf cub that would follow him around and 'mark' him on his shoes as his own before he started chewing on his cloths.

Sirius was so busy laughing at the sight of the little wolf with Remus, that he didn't notice his own state of attire. It would appear that someone had changed Sirius' fine robe into something that looked like Remus has worn it after his last full moon. Of course, when everybody else stated laughing at Sirius, he didn't find it funny at all.

James was in trouble with Lily, due to the fact that, try as he may, a small, a child's size broom kept showing up around Harry. Lily had to be quick to grab it before Harry could get his hands on it. Harry made sure everyone know of his displeasure when he couldn't get the new broom.

Perhaps the one that was picked on the most at the party however, was Peter.

Wormtail had just arrived at the party when his robe caught on fire starting on his left sleeve. Next, when he went to stand up to go to the kitchen for dinner, he promptly fell over, his shoelaces having been tied together.

Dinner wasn't much better. There was a dribble glass; earthworms on his dinner plate; sour pumpkin juice in his glass; and spoiled icing on his piece of the birthday cake. It was almost too much for him.

All of the other marauders denied having anything to do with it, and Lily was appalled at all of the tricks that were being played on their 'good' friend.

End Flashback.

Harry was as happy as any one year old could be. He had parents who loved him, a godfather who tried to spoil him, a playmate his same age in Neville with whom he could share his toys with, and at least one 'uncle' that he loved dearly. The other 'uncle', Peter, made him feel sad and cold. He could never feel comfortable around him and would do anything he could to get away from him when he came close. Couldn't his parents feel it? Couldn't they see the black shadow that seemed to stay on Uncle Peter's arm? It felt bad, like it was going to hurt him. That was one of the main reasons why Harry

didn't like Wormtail. He had been trying to make Uncle Wormtail go home all night. But now it was his bed time. Harry wasn't too worried about Uncle Wormtail right now, he was played-out now and was just looking forward to a nice nights rest so he could wake up and play with his new toys in the morning.

End of Chapter 5

Chapter 6 – One Dark and Stormy Night

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At the Summers End

Tradition held that the end of the Celts year was called 'Samhain'. It was the time of the harvest, and the beginning of a new year.

Over the years, it came to be seen as a night of power. A night when the veil that separates our world from the world of the spirits was at its thinnest. It became 'All Hallows Eve' or Halloween.

Even though the people did not celebrate 'Samhain' as they use to, there was something about that day, that the Potters want to have all of their affairs in order by then. Not because the little ghost and goblins were going to be out visiting the neighbors, but because of the real evil that was about in the land.

'Lord' Voldemort liked to make a big 'display' on this year, as he viewed himself as the 'High Priest' of 'Samhain'. This year was to be no different.

James and Lily Potter wanted to have the Fidelius Charm cast on their home before 'All Hallows Eve'. It was decided that they would go into the Fidelius Charm the evening before – November 30th, 1981. They had just selected who the secret keeper would be for their Fidelius Charm would be.

Of course, everyone would expect Sirius Black to be their secret keeper since he and James were so close, however, to throw people off the track, both James and Lily thought it would be best to use somebody else. But whom could they trust with this type of secret?

Lily wanted to use Remus Lupin. He had proven himself in all types of situations to be a true, loyal and caring friend, one that would not betray their trust.

There was only one problem; Remus was a werewolf.

While that should not eliminate Remus from consideration in Lily's mind, werewolves were seen as 'dark' creatures, leaning to the side of evil. Voldemort had been actively recruiting werewolves into his army with the promise that they would be treated fairly, and be given greater power and freedom when he came into power. That was a

lie of course on Voldemort's part, but he needed the ferocious beasts on his side to help win the war – then, after the war was won, he would 'dispose' of the problem in his own – 'unique' way.

It wasn't fair, but it was enough to raise a shadow of doubt in James' mind about using his good friend from school.

And then there was Peter Pettigrew – Wormtail.

A very unremarkable wizard if ever there was one. It seemed that no one ever noticed him – except to belittle him. He held one of the lowest ranking clerk jobs in the Ministry since graduating from Hogwarts, and had never been promoted. It was almost like he wasn't there. But he had access to almost every bit of information in the Ministry since he was the one everyone yelled at to go and get this report, or gather that scroll. He had been very helpful to Voldemort in keeping him informed of what was going on in the Ministry.

Lily felt a little sorry for the man, but to be honest, he gave her the creeps.

It was like she could feel his eyes on her, lusting after her, when no one else was looking. She felt uneasy around him, and it seemed that Harry did also.

After arguing for several days, if not weeks, it was decided that Sirius would be the secret keeper. But Sirius – trying to be clever, convinced them to use Peter instead.

No one was to know of the switch. Not even Dumbledore.

James and Lily worked with Professor Dumbledore on how to perform the Fidelius Charm. It would require a rune be cast on four stones, and these stones to be placed on the four corners of the property. These runes would 'power' the Fidelius Charm. A 'sealing' charm, would activate the connection between the rune stones, and 'draw' the land under the Fidelius.

One of the problems with the Fidelius charm is that it is not compatible with any other protective charm or ward so as the rune stones are activated, and the Fidelius charm closes; all other protection that was on the land is removed.

The last part of the charm was to implant the knowledge of the location of the land covered by the runes into the secret keeper. It was only the secret keeper that could tell others about the location under the Fidelius charm. This could either be by verbally telling someone the secret, or by writing the information down and freely giving to another person.

Lily had taken the time to compute the distance markings that had to be placed on each rune stone with the rune, and with James and Harry, went to each corner of the property and carefully placed the stones. Then, by activating a special charm on the stones, a dark violet line went out from each of the stones, connecting them together. This not only marked the boundary of the land, but also showed the exact center of the property.

The spell had to be performed from the center point so that everything could be drawn in there.

James, Lily, Harry, and now Peter also stood in the center of Godric's Hollow.

Joining their wands together, Lily and James pointed to the northern most rune and pronounced: 'incho fidelius' (Begin the Fidelius). Then to the southern most rune and pronounced: 'incho fidelius' (Begin the Fidelius). Then to the east; and finally to the west.

After they and completed the initial charm, you could see four shafts of dark violet light shooting up into the sky, enclosing the property, and interceding in the middle.

The next part of the charm was to bring everything together.

Again starting with the northern most point, the Potters pronounced: 'conduco fidelius' (draw / bring together the Fidelius), and going from right to left, drew their wands from the north corner, to the east corner, to the south corner, to the west corner, and back to the north corner. Then, without stopping, drew their wands toward the center of the property. The affect of this was to close up all the property into an area that was outside normal space – folded space if you would. As such, it was very difficult to perform.

James and Lily were trying their hardest to get the charms to come together to the center of the land. They had been working for 20 minutes straining against the forces of nature.

Harry had been sitting on the center point where the forces of the Fidelius crossed. He could tell that his Mummy and Daddy were having trouble with this spell. It must be very important to them if they were working this hard to get something done. Without even thinking, Harry stood up and placed one hand each of their legs, willing them to be strong and to have the power they would need to finish the charm.

As soon as Harry touched James and Lily's leg, they felt a renewed surge of power come over them. It still took another five minutes to close the charm, and bring it to the center.

When the four walls of the Fidelius touched, the land, house, trees, everything vanished and James, Lily, Harry, and Peter were left in an empty field.

Raising their wands one more time, with Harry still hanging onto their legs, James and Lily pointed their wands at Peter and said: 'servo servare fidelius' (watch over and protect Fidelius).

For a moment Peter just stood there raveling in the power that he was feeling. He knew the secret! He had the power to revel! For once he had something no one else in the world had! Not even James! The sensation was almost overwhelming.

James cleared his throat, and Peter came out of his raveling. "Ah, Peter, I seem to have forgotten where I live, but I get the feeling that you may have some idea."

Peter laughed. It was a strange feeling for him to have the upper hand not only over James, but Lily also. He though, briefly, about not tell them, but knew that there was another situation that he could benefit from.

Standing up proudly Peter looked at each of the Potters, and clearly said: "James, Lily, and Harry Potter live at Godric's Hollow." As if by 'magic' Godric's Hollow reappeared in front of them.

Going inside, Peter said, "I'm going to write a few notes so that you can show this information to Sirius, and Remus, and maybe give one Dumbledore so he can notify some of the members of the Order. Well, I'd better be going now, I have some other people to meet."

With that Peter left. Immediately Lily knew something was wrong... very wrong.

James felt safe and comfortable and wanted to go straight to bed. Lily however was nervous. 'Who would Peter be meeting at this time of the night?'

"James, I know it's late, but I would feel a lot better if we at least let Albus, Sirius, and Remus knew where we are at." Lily stated.

"Why honey, what's wrong?"

"I'm not sure James. But don't you find it a little bit strange that Peter said he had someone to meet this late at night?"

"Ya, that is kind of strange... Okay, just to be on the safe side we'll let those three know where we are and I'll leave this one note with Albus if he wants to let anyone else know."

James headed for the fireplace, took a pinch of floo powder, and said "Headmasters office, Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

"Well Harry, Daddy's going to be gone for a while. Why don't I put you to bed."

"I want to thank you little man for helping your Daddy and me cast the Fidelius Charm." Lily said to Harry as she carried him up to his bed. "I don't think we could have done it without you."

Harry for his part just rested his head on his mothers shoulder, listening to her heart and smelling her perfume with his hand in his mouth.

"I know you may not be able to understand me Harry, but I want you to know that I love you with all my heart. When I say 'meum affectus serpire thee ex noceo ac ex mortis' I mean it. I hope my love can protect you from harm and death. You see, I think we have just

made a big mistake. I think Peter is going to turn on us and I think it is going to be soon."

"Tomorrow is Halloween – All Hallows Eve – the most magical day of the year. I'm afraid HE will be coming for us tomorrow. HE will be trying to kill the children of the prophecy. But to do that, HE will have to go through ME."

"I will protect you with all the love I have, but after tomorrow sweetheart, I'm afraid you will be alone in the world. Don't worry though, Mummy and Daddy have taken precautions to make sure Uncle Sirius will take good care of you so you won't have to go stay Mummy's mean sister Petunia."

"Your schooling will be all taken care of, and you will have the opportunity to learn from Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore. The best Headmaster Hogwarts has ever had." Harry laughed sleepily at the funny sounding name.

When Lily got to Harry's room, she just sat in the rocking chair that was in his room and just held him. Her heart was aching right now thinking of what they had done. The only protection they now had over Godric's Hollow was the Fidelius Charm, and it was only as good as the secret keeper. Lily knew that Peter had sold them out. It was just a matter of time – and more then likely tomorrow night.

When James got home about an hour later, he found Lily still holding Harry in the rocking chair. He noticed that Lily had a tear stain on her cheeks. Why had she been crying? There was something in the way that Lily was holding on to Harry that gave James the impression that she didn't think she would be holding him for much longer.

He placed a cushion charm on the chair and on the floor, and a sticking charm on Harry so that he wouldn't slip off of Lily. James then lay down on the floor, and got ready to sleep next to his wife and son. "Nox" he said as the lights went out.

Scene – Lord Voldemort's headquarters – Riddle Manor

Wormtail changed into his Death-eaters uniform quickly. This was a proud moment for him. He had done it! He had become the secret

keeper for the Potters! His Lord would be very pleased with this information.

Apparating to Riddle Manor, Wormtail made his way into his Lord's chamber. No matter how many times he had been there he was still intimidated by Lord Voldemort and the raw power this man had.

Entering quietly, Wormtail waited until his Lord called him forward.

"Ah, Wormtail, what information have you brought me this night concerning the Potters?"

Wormtail hurried to Lord Voldemort's throne, kneeled, and kiss the hem of his robe.

"My Lord, I bring you great news this night. The Potters have entered into a Fidelius charm, and have made me their secret keeper!"

In Wormtail's joy he didn't even stutter while delivering his report. Voldemort was impressed.

"Wormtail! My faithful servant! You have indeed done well this evening and just in time too. Tomorrow is Samhain – the summer's end. The time when magic is at its strongest. We must take advantage of this situation."

"You deserve a reward for your good work this night, Wormtail. What would you have your Lord grant to you?"

Voldemort already knew of Wormtail's lust for Lily. He had to admit; she would be a fine charms or potions mistress to add to his army, even if it had to be under an IMPERIUS curse.

Wormtail hung his head. This was too good to be true! His 'Lord' was about to grant him his heart's desire! He had to be very careful as to how he phrased his request.

"My Lord," Wormtail began, "Serving you is reward enough! However, if you could be so gracious to one of your lowly servants... Give me Lily Potter."

"Ah, Wormtail! Yes, I can see the lust that you have for her in your mind! But a mudblood? It doesn't matter, she will be yours if you can get her to hand over her son to me!" Voldemort knew enough about Lily Potter to know that she would never hand her baby over to Wormtail, or anyone else if he were near, but it took so little to keep Wormtail happy.

"Tha... Thank you m... my Lord!" Wormtail then kneeled again and kissed the hem of Voldemort's robe before leaving the chamber.

"Bellatrix! Get in here!"

Bellatrix entered the room and bowed gracefully before Voldemort while kissing the hem of his robe.

"What do you wish my Lord? Your most loyal and faithful servant awaits to do your bidding."

"Bellatrix, Wormtail here has just brought me the most wonderful news regarding the Potters. They are now virtually defenseless. I am going to attend to the Potters with Wormtail tomorrow night, while you, your husband, and brother-in-law attend to the Longbottom's. I believe you said something about payback and revenge?"

Bellatrix Lestrange's eyes looked as if they were on fire. The previous time she had met Alice Longbottom, she had been hit with a rather nasty flaming whip curse that not only killed her unborn baby (she had just found out she was pregnant), but it also made it so that she could not have any more children. What she wanted more than just about anything in the WORLD was revenge on Alice Longbottom. The only question was what would she do first? Kill her child in front of her eyes? Use the INCENDI SCUTICAE (Fire Whip) on her to tear her body to pieces? Or just use the Cruciatus curse on her until she went crazy?

Bellatrix was brought out of her daydream by her 'Lord'; "Bella! Prepare your team. We strike at midnight!"

"Yes, my Lord! Thank you my Lord!"

Halloween

This whole day had seemed surreal.

The Potters all slept late on Halloween day due to the amount of energy they had used in putting up the Fidelius charm the night before. It wasn't until Sirius and Remus came over for lunch that things started stirring in the Potters home.

"Hey you guys, what are you all doing in here? Did Harry having a hard time sleeping last night?" Sirius asked.

"Oh, Good morning Sirius, Remus, what brings you over here so early?" James asked.

"What do you mean early? It's after 12:00 noon! Come on Lily, I hungry, and I sure Harry could use something to eat too."

"Okay big boy. Here, Sirius, you take Harry and I'll go get something to eat. Ah, James, why is Harry stuck to me?"

"Oh, sorry, when I came in here last night I didn't have the heart to take him off of you, so I put a sticking charm on him so he wouldn't slip off." James' replied.

"Well, could you please take it off of me? We don't want to see Sirius waste away to nothing you know. I know Remus can take care of himself."

"Ah Lily, your too kind" said Remus.

With that, James got up and removed the sticking spell from Harry.

"Here you go Sirius. Why don't you change his nappy while I go get something for us to eat?" Said Lily.

Sirius held Harry out at arms length looking at him. "Ah, James, didn't you say this was one of the advantages of being a father? Changing nappies?"

"Come on Sirius, hand him here, I'll show you how it's done. Don't tell me in all the time you've been watching Harry you've never changed his nappies?"

"Well, I usually wait for Lily to show up on one of her breaks, or at lunch time or let Sissy take care of it. I consider myself very lucky not to have had the pleasure."

"Well then, come on now, I show you how it's done. It really not that hard and I think that Harry will probable be able to potty train in the next few month."

By the time the men got back to the kitchen, Lily had a light luncheon spread set out for them complete with coffee and tea.

"Tell us how the Fidelius charm went last night James." Remus asked. He always seemed interested in learning more about magic. For his part, Remus was still under the impression that Sirius was the secret keeper – after all, he wasn't present when James and Lily made the change, and it was James that had delivered the note with the location of the Potters. If he would have thought more about it, or viewed his memories in a Pensive, he would have realized that the hand writing on the note was Peter's and not Sirius'.

"Well, it was a lot harder then what I had expected, even with both of us working on it." James started.

They then took turns explaining, in general terms, what had happened last night.

Lily took over the conversation; "I didn't think we were going to be able to close the conduco fidelius part of the charm, but just before I gave up, little Harry here, stood up and placed his hand on my and James' leg. All at once, I felt a renewed power and energy. It only took about five minutes after that to get the fidelius charm closed. How did you feel about it James?"

"Pretty much the same was as you described it. I was exhausted before Harry joined us. At the time, I thought it was just the thought of protecting him that made me move on. But now that you mention it, it was like a surge of power entering into my body that helped me finish the spell. I wouldn't have known that Harry would have had that type of power, or would be able to share it with us like that."

"I've noticed that Harry is always in the top 5 percent of his age group as far as growth," said Remus. "Have you ever had him tested as to his magical strength?"

James and Lily both looked at each other. "Ah... Yes, we have Remus, but we would like to keep that private if we could." Lily said. "I know when the medi-witch was here she said something about him having a power rating of 40 or something like that."

Lily had always been a bad liar.

Sirius and Remus just looked at each other with a somewhat confused expression on their faces at her answer.

After a strained moment of silence, Sirius spoke up again: "Well, James, Lily, do you have plans for this special evening? Are you going out anywhere?"

"No, I think we should just stay here at home, especially after just having a Fidelius placed on our home. What good is the charm if we aren't under its protection?" James replies.

"Your right of course, especially with Voldemort still out there. Well, I guess I'll see you tomorrow then." Said Sirius. Remus just waved and started to follow him to the floo.

Before they could get to the fireplace, Lily jumped up with Harry in her arms and ran after them.

"Sirius!" She cried out, "Before you go, do you think you could give 'The Blessing of the Heir' one more time to Harry?"

Sirius stopped and looked at Lily. He could see the want, hope and 'loss?' in her eyes. He walked over to Harry, and, placing his right hand on his head said – with all the feeling and love he could muster: 'meum affectus serpire thee ex noceo ac ex mortis' and then he leaned forward and kissed Harry on the top of the head. When Sirius looked back up to Lily she was crying. "Thank you Sirius, Thank you." Was all she whispered.

Looking back between Harry and Lily, Sirius gave a half smile, and said: "Your welcome Lily, anything for Harry." With that he turned, and with Remus floo'ed out of the Potter Home.

"Lily? Are you alright?" James asked.

"Yes James, I'm alright now." She lied.

For the rest of day, James rested while Lily wrote down anything she could think of to tell Harry, and put it a trunk next to her (not the same trunk hidden in Harry's amulet – She doesn't know anything about it). She was hoping that she would be able to shrink the trunk, and place it with Harry, so that who ever found him could give it to him. Lily also kept two special message quills near the fireplace. These were specially treated quills that would go to a specific person via the floo network should trouble arise. One was designed to go to Sirius, the other to go to Dumbledore and the Order of the Phoenix.

James couldn't help but see all the precautions Lily was taking and confronted her about it.

"Lily, why all these precautions? What do you think could possible go wrong?"

"James, it hurts me to say this, but I am sure we have been sold out by Peter. Things just don't add up. The feeling got even worse when he became the secret keeper. It was like he held our lives in his hands, and he raveled in the power and control that he had. And then that comment about meeting people last night. There is only one group of people that would be up that late at night; that would be Death-eaters!"

"If my hunch is correct we can expect a visit from Wormtail and Lord Voldemort and possible others tonight!"

"Well, what do you want to do? Go to Dumbledore? Set a trap here? What?" James was a bit upset. And even though he did not want to lose faith in his friend, he also didn't want to reject his wife's concerns.

Lily just shook her head 'no' and said: "This is all part of the Prophecy and fate. There is nothing really that we can do. We have tried to prepare Harry as best as we can, and somehow, he will make it through to see tomorrow."

Lily's eyes were wet, she had seen her death, but she knew that Harry would survive.

The time had slipped away. It was nearly midnight on Samhain – Halloween.

Lily had gathered Harry in her arms, and had shrunk the trunk that held all of her personal notes to him, and placed it around his neck and hid it from all muggles and magical senses (This is a second trunk and charm, she and James don't remember the first set).

As the clock struck 12:00 Midnight, the door was blown off of its hinges by a strong Reductor Curse. There standing in the doorway, in full Death-eater uniform, was their one-time friend, Peter Pettigrew.

"Lily, I'm Home!" He joked.

Behind him, Lord Voldemort, with his red eyes flashing, stepped forward, not wanting to waste any time.

"Move out of the way you pathetic moron!" he hissed.

Lily picked up Harry, and banished the message quills to the fireplace.

Voldemort was angry that the Potters were not totally unprepared for their arrival and made his displeasure known to Wormtail. "Wormtail! Find out where those message quills went to and stop them if you can. If I am interrupted before I am finished, I will take out my displeasure on YOU!"

"Ye... Yes My L...Lord" Wormtail shuddered. And jumped into the fireplace after the message quills.

"Take Harry and run!" James said. "I'll try to hold him off for as long as I can! Lily, I love you, and I'm sorry."

With that James Potter stood to face his fate.

"Well, James. We meet again. I think this time your luck has run out."

"Leave now Voldemort! I will not let you pass!"

"Now, Now James. Such a fine pureblood family - it would be a shame for that family to end tonight. I give you one last chance, join me and you and your wife shall live. All I am after is the boy."

"NEVER!" James yelled. With that the duel was on.

James knew he had to hit Voldemort with everything he had quickly to try to injure, slow him down, or – if he were extremely lucky – kill him.

James used his most powerful blasting spell on him, but Voldemort just flicked his wrist, and the spell crashed into the wall, leaving a gaping hole.

He tried again, and again; blasting the ceiling above him to try and have the roof fall on him, or blast the floor out from underneath him, to make him fall into a hole. He used the rubble to get into Voldemort's way so that he couldn't see what was coming at him, but it was like a gnat trying to fight an elephant.

Unnoticed by James, Wormtail came back through the floo in his animagus form. Wormtail snuck around the back of James and turned back into his human form.

'Stupefy!' came the shout from Wormtail. James didn't have a chance to move, and was struck down.

Lord Voldemort walked coldly up to where James was laying, and in a cold hard voice said: "Now you see there is nothing you can do against me. Good-bye James – 'Avada Kedavra'! And a cold green light sped towards James, and a moment later, he was dead.

As he died, his wand rolled free from his hand, and before Wormtail or Voldemort could get it, it vanished from sight.

"Such a pity, it would have been a nice entry to my collection."

"Now Wormtail, where would Lily and the Brat be?"

"Up... Up in the nursery My... My Lor... Lord."

"Then let us go quickly! Your prize awaits!" Voldemort knew that that was all he had to say to get Wormtail's mind off of the fact that he had just killed one of his only true friends.

As they headed to the nursery, Voldemort asked: "What did you do with the message quills?"

"Dum... Dumbledore's I redirected to the Hog's Head – no one will notice it there. I didn't get Sirius Black's quill in time, bu... but I was able to close his floo, and put up an anti-apparition ward over his house. We will not be dis... disturbed Master."

"You had better hope for your sake you are correct Wormtail!"

In the nursery, Lily was holding on to Harry for dear life, she did not want to let him go.

'I must protect him, I must protect him – but how?' was all she was thinking.

They had been able to transfer / copy some of their power from themselves to Harry, could she try to transfer ALL of her power and knowledge to him?

They had only been doing the mind expansion spell for the last three months, would that be enough to hold everything that she knew? She had to try it.

Bringing her occlumency shields up to full strength, she turned them outward to expose all of her thoughts and knowledge, at the same time casting a spell she had never tried before: 'transcribo cognitionis meus donare ad thee' (A copy of my knowledge, belonging to me, I grant to thee).

It was not a pleasant experience for either of them but after several minutes, Lily could tell that at least everything she knew regarding magic, was now in Harry's mind.

Lily now had to try to give Harry all of the power she possessed.

Instead of using the charm that they had for every other power transfer, Lily said: 'condono virtus meus donare ad thee' (I give up, or give away my power to thee).

This time the beam from Lily's wand started out as the deepest red, and was progressing through all of the colors of the rainbow.

Behind her, she heard the door to the nursery being blown off of its hinges.

"Give me the boy!" Voldemort hissed.

"No! Not Harry! Take me! Spare him!"

"Stand aside you silly girl!"

"Not Harry! Please, take me, kill me instead!"

By now the beam between Lily's wand, and Harry, was dark purple. Lily kept her back to Voldemort and Wormtail so that they could not see what she was doing.

"Lily! Please give him the boy! We can still be together! I will always love you and together we can do great things for our Lord and Master, Voldemort!" Wormtail said.

"Even before what you have done tonight Peter, I could never love you or care for you like I do Harry and James!" Lily shouted.

Without warning Voldemort roared: 'Avada Kedavra'!

Lily could feel the curse hit her full in the back. It entered into her body and sought out her magical core. But her magical core was now tightly connected to Harry's magical core!

'Oh, Dear Lord! What have I done!'

She could 'see' the Avada Kedavra curse in all its parts and pieces. She could see the amount of magic that was used to cast the spell. She could see the emotions that were required to cast such a 'dark' spell. But there was still more.

There, in the energy stream – a small piece of 'Tom Riddle?' 'Who was that?'

Not his 'soul', but his Magic – part of his core – his knowledge – his power.

Lily 'turned' around in time to see herself, her magic, and that of Voldemort and this 'Tom Riddle' all follow the magical connection that she had with Harry.

All of her magic entered Harry's core. Lily could see that the core still had room to grow, and it is a good thing that it did!

The power rush from the magic behind the Avada Kedavra entered Harry's core stretching it well past anything point it had been stretched to in the past, but since the core was use to stretching like this in the past, it held and did not rupture.

The curse it's self was stopped and contained by a silver, multi-layer 'blanket' for lack of a better word, came up and surrounded it to where it did not hurt Harry.

'The Blessing of the Heir' Lily thought. 'Sirius said that it had a layering effect, the more times you used it, the more layers of protection you would have!'

The piece of 'Tom Riddle' magical core did not enter Harry's core, but did attach it's self to his core by tiny tendrils of magic. Then it started to drain some of the magic away from Harry, but since the 'Tom Riddle' core was ridged, it could only take a little bit of the magic that was being held in Harry's core – it was acting like a 'relief value' on the core.

Right now, there was enough 'pressure' in Harry's core to keep 'Tom Riddle's magic from mixing with his, but it would only be a matter of time before that happened, and when it did, who knew what would happen.

Lily knew that her body was 'dead' for all intents and purposes. She did not know how long it would be before her soul was removed from Harry's body but she knew it wouldn't be long.

'Mummy? How can you be here Mummy?' Harry could feel his mother's existence in his body, in his mind, and by his magic.

'Mummy? What is that bad man doing? Why is uncle Peter with him? Mummy? Why is your body on the floor, but I can feel you in my heart?'

'Listen sweetheart, Mummy doesn't have much time! Uncle Peter works for that bad man. Uncle Peter told that bad man where we lived so that he could kill us all.'

'Sweetheart, Mummy wants you to know how much I love you, and I am going to try to always be with you. Honey, I don't know if I can, but I need to use some of your power from your core to try to do one last spell.

Lily's 'spirit' stretched her hand and placed it through the wall of Harry's Magical Core. Wishing with all her heart that this would work, she uttered her last spell: *linquo meus coris hic* (Leave my essences (mind/soul/spirit) here, in this place).

As Lily finished the incantation, her soul from her body entered the great ethos, on to the next great adventure; her wand disappeared, to go to the Potter vault, and in sub-conscious of Harry's mind, a perfectly formed mental automaton of Lily Evans Potter appeared.

'Well, it looks like I have a lot of work to get this mind organized and protected'. Lily said.

Meanwhile back in the nursery...

Voldemort looked very pleased with himself. Two of the last three Potter's were dead at his hand, and soon the third and last of the Potter's would also be dead.

Wormtail, however, was shocked speechless. HIS Lily was dead! Voldemort had barely given him any time to talk to her to get her to turn the baby over! He knew that if he had been given time, he could have gotten her to give him the baby.

"MY LORD! YOU PROMISED! YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME TIME TO TALK TO HER!" Wormtail yelled.

Voldemort looked at Wormtail. "CRUCIO! Quiet you worthless little man! Do not try to counsel me! I am here to show the world that there is no one that can conquer me! I do not fear any child of

prophecy and I will eliminate anyone to get to my way... ANYONE Wormtail... do I make myself clear?" he hissed coldly.

"Ye... Yes mm... my L...Lord. Please, forgive me." Wormtail whimpered.

Voldemort turned his attention back to Harry.

"So, you are one of the children of prophecy? I will take great pleasure in killing you and eliminating such a weak pureblood family from the wizarding world! 'Avada Kedavra'!

Voldemort, Wormtail and Harry all watched the sick green spell speed toward Harry. Within Harry, however, the first 'Avada Kedavra' that had come from Lily seemed to be attracted to the second 'Avada Kedavra' currently coming to him from Voldemort.

Before the second curse could get to Harry, the first curse, still wrapped in the 'blanked' of 'The Blessing of the Heirs' found the most direct path to the curse via the center of Harry's forehead and out.

As it came out, it left a distinctive 'lightning bolt' cut in the forehead. The power core of 'Tom Riddle' was also pulled to the source of the second curse, but could not leave due to the fact that it had tendrils attached to Harry's main magical core. So instead, it became lodged behind the cut in Harry's head.

As 'The Blessing of the Heirs' left Harry, turned ridged just long enough to fully reflect Voldemort's second 'Avada Kedavra' curse back to him. Voldemort did not have time to move before the full force of both of his own curses hit him.

The resulting explosion totally obliterated Voldemort's body leaving him less than a spirit.

To say the least, Wormtail was shocked beyond words.

His 'Lord' and 'Master' had been 'killed' by a 15-month-old baby!

Wormtail was brought out of his shock when he heard the angry roar of a magically enhanced Triumph motorcycle 'Sirius!' He had to get out of there FAST! 'ACCIO VOLDEMORT'S WAND!' As soon as

Wormtail had the wand, he changed into his animagus form, and left the house.

Sirius' rage

As soon as Sirius saw Lily's quill come out of the fireplace, he knew the Potters were in trouble.

Getting over the shock, he grabbed his wand and cape and headed to the fireplace. Grabbing a hand full of floo powder, he through it into the fireplace. "GODRIC'S HOLLOW" he yelled as he ran into the fireplace, only to hit the back of the wall and fall backward out of it. "What in the world? Why would the floo be closed?."

So next he ran outside to try to apparate there – again nothing happened. Anti-apparition wards had been set up around his house.

Sirius knew he was wasting time! Right now every moment counted. But what could he use to get there? His Bike! It was faster then a broom, and right now he needed to get some of the adrenalin out of his system by trying to blow something up.

He reached into his pocket, and took out what looked like a model motorcycle and set it on the ground.

'ENGORGIO' he shouts and stands back as the motorcycle grows to full size.

Jumping on the bike, he forgoes the helmet, and just starts it up and leaves as quickly as he can.

With a top speed of 564 KPH (350 MPH), Sirius is at Godric's Hollow in a matter of minutes.

As he concentrates on the note that James had given him the night before, he sees Godric's Hollow come into view. And what he sees does not please him.

The door to James and Lily's home has been blown to pieces.

The front room and living room area looked like a small war zone. 'Well someone didn't go down without a good fight.' He thought – then he saw James' body. "No James! No! No!" He ran over to him

and saw a 'stupefy' mark on his back, but no other marking. His eyes were open, and his hands empty. 'Well, I don't see a snapped wand anywhere.' Sirius looked back behind James where the stunning spell would have come from. There in the settled dust, you could see where someone had changed from a rat to a 'man'. 'Wormtail!'

He came out of his shock when he heard Harry crying in the nursery. 'Could Wormtail and Voldemort still be here? If they are, I'd probably have a better chance against them as Padfoot.'

Sirius quickly changed in to Padfoot and ran for the nursery and quickly and quietly as he could. As he got close, he began to sniff the air to see if he could tell who was in there. 'It smells like death. I hope Lily got that rat before HE got her.'

Changing back into Sirius, he looks in quickly to assess the situation. What he sees shocks him.

The room looks like it has been the center of an explosion. All the glass is blown out, the wallpaper and paint has been burned off and scared. Hardly any of the furniture is left intact.

On the ground is Lily's body, with Harry, bleeding from the forehead next to her trying to wake her up.

"Up Mummy, up please." He says over and over.

Over by Harry's crib is a robe of blood red – Voldemort's robe – It's still smoldering, whatever happened here, one thing was sure.

Voldemort was Dead!

"Harry... Harry... come on son, we have to get out of here. It isn't safe for you right now. Can you tell me what happened?"

Harry looked up with tear filled eyes and said: "Mummy not get up! Uncle Peter with bad man! Bad Uncle Peter!"

"Harry, I know you're too young to understand right now, but Mummy and Daddy won't wake up. They have gone to the next big adventure. They have gone to where they can look over you always. Please son, come with me we need to get out of here, it's not safe."

"Ota Paddy. Carry me?" And Harry lifted his arms up to Sirius.

Sirius' heart was near breaking as he saw his godson look so helpless, but trusting at the same time. He reached down and picked up his loving Harry.

Just as he made it out the front door, the hairs on the back of Sirius' neck stood straight up. Rolling to his left, Sirius protected Harry in his arms as well as he could as a large bolt from a crossbow went over his head.

"HAGRID! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? BE A BIT MORE CAREFUL WILL YA, I'VE GOT HARRY IN MY ARMS!"

"So, it is yu Sirius! I 'ought yu luv'd James en Lily bettr thn 'at!"

"What are you talking about Hagrid, I came here after I received a message quill from Lily. When I tried the floo-network, it was closed off, when I tried to apparate, there were wards around my house to where I couldn't, so I had to take my bike. I just got here a few minutes ago, and found James and Lily dead, and little Harry up in the nursery trying to wake up his Mum. The other things I found were RAT footprints that turn into a humans, and a blood red robe that could only belong to Voldemort – BUT HE'S NOT IN IT." Something that either Lily or Harry did killed Voldemort!"

"Codswoller! Neir one of 'em 'ould be powful nough ta do someing like 'at! 'Wat's the real story? The 'ony way 'ou-know-'ho could 'ave been 'ere is if the secret-keeper broung him 'ere. And everybody 'nows THE SECRET KEEPER IS YOU!" Hagrid roared.

"No, James and Lily changed at the last minute. They thought that every one would expect me to be the secret-keeper, but we changed at the last minute to throw everyone off (Sirius couldn't mention who the new secret-keeper was). We didn't even tell Dumbledore in case one of the portraits was leaking information to Voldemort!"

"I 'dona care wat ya say. I 'ave strict oraders from Dumbledore his self to bring little 'arry back ta 'ogwarts right now! I 'dona wnt to fig't ya Sirius, but thens is me orders."

"But I'm his godfather Hagrid! At least let me come with you."

"Sor'y Sirius, Dumbledore said just 'arry. Maybe ya can come by later."

"I don't like this one bit Hagrid! I'm Harry's godfather! I'm the one James and Lily want to take care of him! I really don't care what Dumbledore has planed right now, I'm the one who should be taking care of Harry! Please Hagrid!"

Hagrid held his ground. "Sor'y Sirius, I have me oraders. I prom'sd Dumbledore that I would bring 'arry to 'im direct'y. Ah 'wear on me 'agic, no 'arm will 'ome to 'im".

Sirius knew is his current frame of mind he was in no position to fight Hagrid. Being a half giant made him made him resistant to most spells, and besides, Hagrid was a good man who would do EVERYTHING in his power to fulfill Professor Dumbledore's order, and keep Harry safe.

"Okay Hagrig, you take Harry to Dumbledore, just take care of him like your life depends upon it because it does!"

Sirius slowly handed a now sleeping Harry over to Hagrid. "Be well Harry."

"Hagrid, take my motorcycle and keep it safe. I'll be by to see Harry as quickly as I can, but for right now... I have me a Rat to catch."
End of Chapter 6

Chapter 7 – The missing day

AN – The following answers some of those questions:

1. The second trunk Lily is getting ready for Harry is a regular trunk. She does not remember anything about the trunk in the Amulet. This second trunk will just be shrinking this trunk down to the size of a deck of playing cards, and hanging it around his neck like a necklace. The amulet is hidden from magical and muggle sight.

2. The Knowledge transfer spell is one that Lily only uses just before her death (She is a Charm's mistress after all). The spell that the Potters were using on Harry from the time that he was 1 year old until just 5 days before their demise, was a mental expansion spell – to make his brain better equipped to handle any new information he comes across (more synopsizes between brain hemispheres).

3. Dumby (your word, not mine – though I might agree) will not be able to tell how powerful Harry really is. The Amulet will prevent that spell from working (whole in my script after month 3). Prior to month 4, when the Potters were testing Harry, the Amulet would have been off of him so that the magnitudo de magica –(size of magic) spell would have worked. If Dumby tries any other spell to try to measure the size of Harry's core, he will get a very erratic reading (one time 9, the next time 100 – but never too high to scare the D-man).

4. Harry is going to be A LOT smarter in this story then in the books, but it will not come all at once. Remember, Lily's essence is working in his sub-conscious mind. Right now little Harry is not even aware of her, but that will change between ages 2 and 3, but it won't start training him yet – still a bit too young.

5. Things will be different at the Dursleys. Harry will still be treated almost like a house elf, but he will not be abused. He will be in the cupboard under the stairs, but it will have a 'familiar feeling' (something about his mother casting a spell on the room or something [hint, hint]). And besides, he has to have somewhere to put his trunks [hint, hint again].

6. Harry will do very well in school, but will not 'out shine' all the rest.

7. Don't worry about not using the trunk for training – yet, but reading and studying? Yes. He has a lot of books to read in his family's library – Hermione won't know what hit her when she goes to school. Physical training won't start until Harry is at least 8 or 9

years. I don't care who you are, your body has to grow and mature as a sane rate. If you push physical training too soon, you can actually stunt the growth of the body – with, or without magic.

8. The empty chamber number 9 is directly from RossWrock's great work 'The Power of Time' – Please read it.

9. I know that Samhain would be celebrated at sundown, but it's much more dramatic if everything happens at midnight.

rdg2000

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General References:

General Info: [http :/ www \(dot\) hp-lexicon \(dot\) org / index-2 \(dot\) html](http://www.hp-lexicon.org/index-2.html)

Latin References: [http :/ www \(dot\) erols \(dot\) com/whitaker/words \(dot\) htm](http://www.erols.com/whitaker/words(dot)htm) - William Whitaker

The term 'Ma' is from 'A Tabby and Her Kit' by uber grasshopper

Summary: What is 'The power he knows not' and how did Harry get it? How did Harry survive the killing curse and what does Sirius Black have to do with it? Who is the voice Harry is hearing in his head?

Repost:

Essences of Lily – Chapter 7 – The Missing Day

Halloween Night – 11:59 PM

Hagrid had stepped in to The Hog's Head Tavern in Hogsmeade in his large musk ox coat to protect him from the cold. He had planned on a quiet evening with just himself and a 'small' mug of mead to celebrate Samhain.

"Bar-keep if ya please! 'ow a'bout a mug a mead to 'art off with:" Hagrid bellows as he comes in to the tavern.

He just gets up to the bar, when the fireplace at the Tavern turned green – announcing the arrival of someone via floo. This was highly unusual since this fireplace was not connected to the floo network.

The bar keeper (Albus Dumbledore's brother, Aberforth) had his wand out ready to stun who ever came through. Everyone was quite surprised when the only thing that came through was a writing quail.

The quail flew directly to Aberforth, who caught it and looked at it closely. "Hagrid, I think you best be taking this up to the Headmaster at the castle, and be smart about it." And he handed the quail to him.

Hagrid looked at the quail, then looked at his mug of mead. "Don't worry Hagrid. It'll still be here when you get back and it will be on the house. But you should be quick about getting this up to the Headmaster."

"Oh, all right, if you say so."

Hagrid slips his coat back on and heads back to the castle as quickly as he can.

Headmasters office Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Albus Dumbledore is worried, sitting behind his desk. He has just received work from his spy that Voldemort is planning several attacks tonight, including both of the children of prophecy soon, but he didn't know when. Somehow Voldemort has found the location of the Potters. That could only mean one thing... Sirius Black was a spy for Voldemort.

If Sirius was Voldemort's spy, then that would mean all of the plans of The Order of the Phoenix had been compromised. Voldemort would know all of their spy's in his network – except for this newest one that had come to him just over a year ago.

Severus Snape had been an excellent spy. He had a totally unreadable exterior, and a superior Occlumency shield around his mind, which Dumbledore himself could not break through.

Professor Dumbledore knew that he should be doing something, but right now, he couldn't move. He was waiting for the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, to come and help him 'polish up' his beginning-of-the-month address that he was giving in front of the Wizengamot tomorrow – well, later today actually. He had even sent part of his Auror detail ahead of him to make sure the Headmaster would be present when he arrived. Most unusual. Why did he have to wait until the very last minute? Most inconvenient.

The fire in the Headmaster's fireplace turned green announcing the arrival of Minister Fudge. "Ah Albus, thank you so much for helping me at such a late date. Darn tricky thing this speech this year, just can't get the right feel for what I want to get across."

Just then, the ward on the gargoyle let Albus know that Hagrid was coming up the stairs, and he was in a hurry. You could actually feel the floor in the Headmasters office shake as Hagrid took the stair four at a time.

The Headmaster mentally ordered the door to his office to open, so that Hagrid wouldn't knock the door off the hinges when he got to it.

"Excuse me for just a moment Minister... It seems that my grounds keeper has something of importance that requires my immediate attention." Albus said as politely, yet coldly as he could.

Just then, Hagrid came running through the door carrying what looked like a plain writing quail in huge hand.

"Professor Dum'ledore sir! This just came flyin out of the fireplace at The 'og's Head in town! The bar-keep there thought this was somethin you should see it as soon as possible."

"What? An ordinary writing quail? Have you gone deft man?" Minister Fudge said. "Now leave us alone why don't you Hagrid? The Headmaster and I have important matters to attend to!"

Professor Dumbledore went white as a sheet. He knew immediately that this was a message quail from Lily Potter. It was only to be used in the most direr of circumstances. And there was only one circumstance that this could be... Voldemort was at the Potters!

Albus would have liked nothing better then to stun the Minister for making such a stupid comment, but he couldn't... Not right now.

"This won't take but a moment Minister. I just need to show something to Hagrid and send him on his way." Professor Dumbledore said calmly.

"I don't see what could be more important then my speech now Dumbledore! Can't this wait until the morning? I have to get this speech up to my usual high standards." Fudge said looking self-important.

"I assure you Minister, this will take but a moment – and it is most important." Dumbledore was moving to his private quarters and signaling Hagrid to follow him. Albus thought; 'Why is Minister Fudge so set on keeping me here? Is he in on the attack on the Potters?'

As soon as Albus and Hagrid were out of ear-shot of the Minister, the Headmaster turned to Hagrid and took a piece of parchment out of his pocket, and gave it to Hagrid to read.

'James, Lily, and Harry Potter live at Godric's Hollow'

Hagrid's head shot up as he came to know the secret. In a shaky voice he ask: "Ya don't think that..." He couldn't finish the sentence.

"Yes Hagrid, I'm afraid it does. I need you to go there NOW, and bring back ANY of the POTTER'S that are still alive there. Take special care that you bring young Harry back with you regardless of anything else." Professor Dumbledore shuttered as he thought what might be happening at Godric's Hollow right now.

"I will give you a portkey to use that will take you there when you are ready, but since I don't know who all you will be bringing back, you'll have to make it back to Hogwarts the best you can. Make sure no one follows you! It's important to get Harry back here at any cost. You should go armed. But Hagrid, take care. Anyone could be a trader."

Hagrid knew what the Headmaster meant... Sirius Black worked for Voldemort!

"Don' you worry Professor, I'll bring em back if it is at all possible!" Hagrid swore in an oath.

With that, Hagrid handed Professor Dumbledore back the piece of parchment, and took the sock offered as a portkey from him. He then turned around and ran out of the office as fast as he could, not even acknowledging the Minister on his way out.

As Professor Dumbledore entered back into his office, the Minister was still looking at the door that the mountain of a man had just exited through. "Are you sure he's alright Albus? I mean, really! To not even acknowledge ME on the way out! I think he should come back here and rectify the situation this moment – Don't you?"

"I apologies for Hagrid's behavior. He is currently doing me a big favor, and I'm afraid he may have gotten a little carried away. I assure you it will not happen again." Dumbledore said. He had placed his hand on Minister Fudge's Auror to keep him from going after Hagrid.

Professor Dumbledore sat back down to help the Minister write his talk.

By the end of the session, Professor Dumbledore could hardly wait for Fudge and his entourage to leave. Just as he was leaving, Minister Fudge turned around and said; "Thank you Albus. A fine job as usual. Lucius said you would be the best to help with this." And with that, he turned and entered the floo.

Hagrid's Point of View

(Morning of November 1st, 1981)

'James, Lily, and Harry Potter live at Godric's Hollow'

Hagrid was in shock. He didn't even realize that he didn't know the Potters had gone under a Fidelius Charm. That meant that 1) the charm was working, and 2) the secret keeper had to let someone know where they were at.

Hagrid could only think of Sirius Black as a secret keeper for the Potters, after all, he had lived with the Potters after his own family had disowned him, he had been James' best man at his wedding,

and he was little Harry's godfather – so who else could the secret keeper be.

Professor Dumbledore had told the members of the Order of the Phoenix that Voldemort was after the Potters and the Longbottom's, but he didn't say why. The quail must have been from Lily to let Albus know that she was in trouble.

Hagrid thought back to when Lily and James were students here at Hogwarts.

In all his 40+ years that he had been here as grounds keeper, he had never met someone as kind and loving as young Lily Evens.

She was one of the first muggle-born students that had befriended him. She would sneak down to his hut to talk to him, and to show him what she was learning in her classes. She would also come down to do some of her homework in potions, DADA, transfigurations, Charms, everything. She would encourage Hagrid to do the homework with her saying that it helped her understand the lesson material if she could 'explain' to another student.

When asked about the other students in Gryffindor, she explained that she didn't feel too comfortable in her new 'house', being a muggle-born and all. She had already had several 'run-ins' with a quartet of boys who called themselves 'The Marauders'. It seemed all they wanted to do was prank people and talk about some wizarding game called 'quidditch'.

Hagrid knew it wasn't pity he was getting from young Ms. Evens, it was friendship. He had told her about how he had been expelled, and how he wasn't to use magic. She was the one that figured how to make the half of his wand that he still had work for him, and hid it in his large pink umbrella. She felt that he had been wronged, and she was going to do everything in her power to correct that error.

Hagrid always thought he was a bad student, and that Lily was wasting her time, but she assured him that she was doing this as much for herself, as she was for him.

She knew that Hagrid had a love for 'misunderstood' animals that would frequently require doctoring. So she order a special potions

book that contained all the common potions needed to take care of everything from an Abraxan to a Yeti.

Hagrid had tears in his eyes as he thought about that sweet girl who had done so much for him. You bet he made sure James Potter was serious with his intentions regarding Lily when he started to date her. He couldn't have been happier for her then when she married James. And after little Harry was born, he felt as proud as any adopted 'uncle' could.

He would not let anything bad happen to her or her family if it was at all within his power.

Hagrid had been so deep in thought, he couldn't remember how he got to his hut, but he was here. He quickly grabbed his crossbow, several bolts, a lantern, and his pink umbrella – just in case, and activated the portkey.

He landed at the edge of Godric's Hollow and immediately headed down the road to the house. If not for the lantern, it would have been hard to see the road, since it was only a few days past a new moon.

When he got to the house he stopped in shock. The house was barely standing. Smoke was billowing out of several of the windows, and you could tell that the front door had been blown completely off. But what caught his attention was the flaming red Triumph Bonneville sitting in front of the house with its lights still on, shining at the front door of the house and the motor was still hot. Sirius Black's motorcycle! He was here! He did betray Lily and her family! He felt like ripping him limb from limb.

As he started to approach the front of the house, he heard someone coming out. He extinguished his lantern, drew back his crossbow and loaded a bolt and got behind a tree to see who came out.

To say Hagrid was a bit shocked when he saw Sirius come out with a little bundle with black hair in his arms would be an understatement. But something else was strange also. Sirius was crying. Crying like he had just lost his family. What was going on? Hagrid didn't know and really didn't have time to find out. He had to get little Harry back to Hogwarts and Dumbledore as soon as possible.

He decided to give Sirius a warning shot and fired his crossbow just over his head.

As if by instinct, Sirius protected Harry as best as he could, and rolled out of the way of the crossbow's bolt.

'That's not normal if you're trying to kill someone.' Hagrid thought.

"HAGRID! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? BE A BIT MORE CAREFUL WILL YA, I'VE GOT HARRY IN MY ARMS!"

"So, it is yu Sirius! I 'ought yu luv'd James en Lily bettr thn 'at!"

"What are you talking about Hagrid, I came here after I received a message quail from Lily. (Had Sirius received a quail also? Why would Lily have to send him one if he was the betrayer?) When I tried the floo-network, it was closed off, when I tried to apparate, there were wards around my house to where I couldn't, so I had to take my bike. I just got here a few minutes ago, and found James and Lily dead, and little Harry up in the nursery trying to wake up his Mum. The other things I found were RAT footprints that turn into a humans, and a blood red robe that could only belong to Voldemort – BUT HE'S NOT IN IT." Something that either Lily or Harry did killed Voldemort!"

"Codswoller! Neir one of 'em 'ould be powful nough ta do somein like 'at! 'Wat's the real story? The 'ony way 'ou-know-'ho could 'ave been 'ere is if the secret-keeper broung him 'ere. And everybody 'nows THE SECRET KEEPER IS YOU!" Hagrid roared.

"No, James and Lily changed at the last minute. They thought that every one would expect me to be the secret-keeper, but we changed at the last minute to throw everyone off. We didn't even tell Dumbledore in case one of the portraits was leaking information to Voldemort!"

"I 'dona care wat ya say. I 'ave strict oraders from Dumbledore his self to bring little 'arry back ta 'ogwarts right now! I 'dona wnt to fig't ya Sirius, but them's is me orders."

"But I'm his godfather Hagrid! At least let me come with you."

"Sor'y Sirius, Dumbledore said just 'arry. Maybe ya can come by later."

"I don't like this one bit Hagrid! I'm Harry's godfather! I'm the one James and Lily want to take care of him! I really don't care what Dumbledore has planed right now, I'm the one who should be taking care of Harry! Please Hagrid!"

Hagrid held his ground. "Sor'y Sirius, I have me oraders. I prom'sd Dumbledore that I would bring 'arry to 'im direct'y. Ah 'wear on me 'agic, no 'arm will 'ome to 'im".

Sirius knew is his current frame of mind he was in no position to fight Hagrid. Being a half giant made him made him resistant to most spells, and besides, Hagrid was a good man who would do EVERYTHING in his power to fulfill Professor Dumbledore's order, and keep Harry safe.

"Okay Hagrid, you take Harry to Dumbledore, just take care of him like your life depends upon it because it does!"

Sirius slowly handed a now sleeping Harry over to Hagrid. "Be well Harry."

"Hagrid, take my motorcycle and keep it safe. I'll be by to see Harry as quickly as I can, but for right now... I have me a Rat to catch."

Hagrid noticed that Sirius had a look in his eye that said he would kill that little rat if he found him – But just who was this rat he wondered?

'Maybe he wasn't the secret-keeper after all. I mean if he were, he wouldn't have given 'arry to me so quickly or easily. If someone else was the secret-keeper then... But why didn't they trust Professor Dumbledore?' Hagrid though.

Sirius apparated away with a thunderous cracking sound – typical of when wizards are VERY upset.

Hagrid looked down at Harry for the first time and noticed that he was bleeding from his forehead.

'Oh blimey! I have to get 'arry to Madame Pomfrey as quick as possible!'

He then took the large bag that he was carrying and using his umbrella, changed it into a baby carrier to where he could put Harry in it, and carry him on his front. He also cast a circulation charm, and a constant temperature charm on Harry and the carrier so that Harry wouldn't get too hot under his musk ox coat while they went back to Hogwarts.

'Well, it's a good thing that Sirius left his bike here, or I might have to use the Knight Bus to get back to 'ogwarts.'

It took a little while, but soon Hagrid had the bike running, flying, and heading back to Hogwarts.

When he got it back to Hogwarts, he took Sirius' bike and put it behind his hut, then, as carefully as possible, he made his way up to the castle, and to the infirmary.

"Madame Pomfrey? Madame Pomfrey! Where are you? Lit'le 'arry needs looked at right now!" Hagrid bellowed.

"You will keep you voice down in here Hagrid!" Poppy Pomfrey said hotly as she came out of her office in her robe.

"Who is this 'little Harry'? And why does he need looked at right now?" Madame Pomfrey ask as she was getting her equipment and wand ready to do the examination.

"Lit'le 'arry Potter! James and Lily Potter's son. They're both dead, but according to Sirius Black, either Lily or little Harry here did something to 'You-know-Who' and killed him! Just his robes were left of him!"

"I find that highly unlikely! We all know that 'You-know-Who' is the most powerful dark wizard that there has been since Grindelwald. How do you expect a little 15-month-old baby to defeat someone like that? But I am getting some very unusual readings from this scar on his forehead. I can close the wound, but it won't let me heal it without leaving a scar. I'm also getting the reading of not one, but two killing curses from the scar! But, that... that's impossible! No one

can withstand one killing curse let alone two! How could this have happened?" Madame Pomfrey asked.

"How could what have happened Poppy?" Asked Professor Dumbledore as he stepped into the infirmary.

"Young Harry here, Headmaster. He shows signs of surviving not one, but two killing curses with nothing to so for it, except a very stubborn scar on his forehead." Madame Pomfrey replied.

"I can't say Poppy, mainly because I don't know." Came the Headmasters response.

"I have sent Alastor and a team of aurors to the Potter's home. Kingsley Shacklebolt is taking a team to the Longbottom's to see if we can protect them any better. They should both be back shortly with their reports."

"May I look at Harry Poppy?" The Headmaster asked. "If you'll excuse us Hagrid?"

"Oh... Sur' Professor. I 'ave som things ta take care of at my hut. I'll see ya later 'eadmaster."

Poppy and the Headmaster waited until Hagrid had left the infirmary. The Headmaster turned to his Medi-witch and asked: "Poppy what can you tell me? I need to know everything. How are the other results from your examination? How did Harry survive the killing curse?"

"Headmaster, I don't know what to tell you. As you can see all of the standard scans are normal. I am having trouble with the power-rating scan, but according to the records at St. Mungo's, it was a 39 when he was tested just a few days after he was born, so you would expect him to be some where around 85 or 90 by now, but look at this." Madame Pomfrey cast the Power-rating spell on Harry 'magnitudo de magica'. Above Harry's head a small cloud appears that displays '53', then a few seconds later '89'. Another few seconds – '35'. Then '17'. After that Madame Pomfrey cancels the spell.

"It may be that Harry's core was somehow damaged when he was hit with the kill curse." The Headmaster stated.

"I don't know Headmaster, but I have also found the remains of two spells that look like they may have been Lily's prior to the killing curse, but unfortunately, the power mask of the killing curse is preventing me from identifying them." The Matron says.

"That is too bad. Lily was a talented charms mistress. I wonder if she actually found a spell that would block the killing curse? It would be invaluable to us in the fight against Voldemort and the Death-eaters if we could take that weapon out of his arsenal."

"Madam Pomfrey, how soon before little Harry will be able to leave the hospital?"

"I'm not sure Headmaster. As far as I can tell, he is ready to go right now. I've fixed the cut on his forehead as best I can, but will always have that scare. Right now, I think a good rest is all he needs before I let him go."

"Of course my dear. Please let me know when he wakes I have much that must be done by tomorrow."

Albus Dumbledore headed back to his office. He indeed had much to do, and quickly. Harry could not stay here; Hogwarts was no place to raise a child.

He would have to check in the Hall of Records to see if James and Lily left a will. He was sure they had, but if the will listed Sirius Black as Harry's guardian, he would have to see what he could do to 'correct' that problem. The best thing would be if he could find a relative somewhere that had a life-debt to pay to the Potters. If he could find that, he could erect ancient blood based wards that would protect him from harm.

Upon reaching his office, Professor Dumbledore crafted a letter to the Hall of Records, using his position as the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, and Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards as the authority he needed to request for these things (this was clearly not a school matter). Using Ministry letterhead, he was able to 'fly' his request through the floo network to the Hall of Records at the ministry for information on both the will, and the life-debt.

Just as his message left, Alastor Moody, a semi-retired senior auror flooded into his office.

"Ah Albus – what a mess, what a mess." Alastor said as he limped over to the chair in front of the Headmasters desk.

"The house nearly fell down on us while we were doing our inspection. James must have put up one hell of a fight before he went down. The entire downstairs was blown to bits and heavily damaged – mostly from James wand from what we could tell. There were only two other curses found in the room. A weak stunning spell, that looks like it hit him in the back, and of course the AK that finished him off."

"Who do you think cast the stunning spell, Alastor? Could it have been Sirius Black?"

"Black? Huh, I don't think so, not unless he was very drunk or very wounded, besides, it looked like whoever hit James from the back transformed from RAT to human."

"A rat? As far as I know there are no animagus registered in all of Europe that are a rat."

"Well, if you want my opinion, it had to be someone close to Potter. What was that little group of troublemakers called? The Marauders? Knowing them, I wouldn't put it past 'em to become animagi so they could keep Lupin under control when he has his little furry problem once a month. But a rat wouldn't be able to help keep a werewolf under control. I recon' they would need to be something bigger – but didn't Potter have one friend? Little mouse of a man? What was his name?"

"I believe the person you are looking for is Peter Pettigrew." Professor Dumbledore replied.

"Yes! That's the one! Never did like that one. His eyes were always too shifty. He always looked afraid. I recon' that's why he would chum around with Potter and his group – for protection."

"That's ridiculous Alastor! You know how difficult it is to become an animagus. Not everyone can do it. And to do so without someone like Minerva helping them, it would just be too dangerous!"

"Well, think what you want Headmaster, but I know Potter and Black are both smart enough, and sly enough to do something like this without anyone being the wiser for it. And if those two did it, you know they would have included that little rat-faced friend of theirs, Pettigrew. In fact, the more I think of it, the more a 'rat' personality fits that young man."

"No, I'm sure if the Potters were going to change their secret keeper they would have informed me." Albus said, trying to convince himself.

"Well look at it this way then Dumbledore," Mad-eye continued, "Who is Potter's best friend? Black! Who was Potter's Best man at his wedding? Black! Who knows how to fight dirty? Black! Who doesn't have to work another day in his life if he didn't want to? Black! Who is the logical choice to be their secret keeper? Black! That's what everybody would think! But I hope I taught young Potter better than that in Aurors School. 'CONSTANT VIGILANCE' I always say. No they probably wanted everyone to think Black would be their secret keeper so that Voldemort would go looking for him, all the time the real secret keeper could 'hide in plain sight'. And who better for that than the one person nobody notices. Pettigrew."

"So if Voldemort is looking for Sirius, there would be no pressure on Peter now would there? He could go on living his life, and no one would look at him twice thinking HE was their secret keeper now would they?" Albus said thoughtfully.

"Oh, it's so brilliant it almost worked! Just one small problem, it looks like Peter is a Death-eater." Mad-eye Moody's 'mad-eye' was whipping back and forth as he thought about the Potter's situation.

"That may be your opinion Alastor, however, the Potters gave me no indication that they were switching secret keeper, so I still say it must have been Sirius. We are just lucky that Hagrid got there when he did so he could take Harry from the madman." Dumbledore stated.

"But we are getting off track. Tell me what else you found at the house?" Dumbledore leaned back in his chair, resting his steeped hands on his chest.

"Like I said, James put up quite a fight down on the lower floor of the home, if not for magic, I'm sure it would have fallen down around us. He had been stunned in the back, and AK'd at close range. There was no wand snapped, so either Voldemort has it, or it went back to his family's vault."

"You could tell that he had used up a good deal of his magical power, his core reserves were pretty low. We got his body out before we went up stair to look at the nursery."

"The nursery was a complete mess! It looked as if the entire place had been burned."

"We found Lily's body by the crib. There was something very odd in the room, as far as the residual magic though; you could almost feel the deepest hate, but at the same time the deepest love in the room at the same time. The hate I would attribute to the AK's that were used in there, but I don't know about the deepest love."

"I did find it interesting that Lily had absolutely no magical reserves remaining in her. As if all of her energy went into one last spell. But what ever that spell was, we may never know."

"There was also a red cape and robe there that reeked with dark magic. Voldemort's magical signature was all over it. I don't think he would have left them there by chose. The only thing I could think of is that what ever Lily did in that room, vanquished Voldemort – at least for now. We were able to get Lily's body and the clothes out before the house collapsed." Mad-eye finished his report.

"Thank you Alastor. You have conformed many of the theories that I have suspected. Please keep me informed with regards to Voldemort's artifacts. I am a bit concerned that his wand was not found at the scene. But, no matter, that is a mystery for another day."

Mad-eye got out of his chair and went over to the fireplace and flooded out of the office.

Before Dumbledore could get situated back at his desk, the flames in the fireplace turned green again. The head of senior auror Shacklebolt appeared in the flames.

"Excuse me Headmaster, do you have a moment? There's been some difficulties at the Longbottom's tonight." He asked.

"Of course Kingsley, please come through."

Professor Dumbledore had hoped for a few moments so he could get better control over his emotions with the loss of James and Lily. He just hoped within himself that the news would be better with regards to the Longbottom family. For now he would just have to keep his emotions bottled up inside, and make sure none of his feelings showed on the outside while they were in the middle of this crisis. But regardless of what may have happened, he had to keep control of everything. Of where young Harry was to live, or who would look after young Mr. Longbottom.

With Neville it would be a little easier. He still had a grandmother on his fathers side. A very formidable woman committed to the side of the light.

Kingsley's head disappeared from the flames, and shortly there after, he came walking through the Headmasters fireplace.

"I'm sorry to be the bearer of bad news this morning Headmaster." Kingsley began.

"Why? What has happened? Has anyone been killed?" The Headmaster was sounding a bit concerned at this point.

"No, no one was killed, however, we didn't get there in time to prevent the Lestrangle's, and Barty Crouch Jr. from torturing Frank and Alice insane. We've already sent them to St. Mungo's. It doesn't look good for them though." Kingsley reported sadly.

Dumbledore put his head in his hands thinking about the pain and suffering they must have endured before breaking.

"What of little Neville?" Professor Dumbledore was almost afraid to ask.

"It appears that he had spent the day at his Gran's, and wasn't hurt at all." Came the reply.

Professor Dumbledore breathed a sigh of relief that Neville had not been harmed, but felt sorry that he was now basically parent less. He knew that Neville's grandmother would take care of him.

Meanwhile back in the infirmary, 'Lily's Essences' was busy at work. To her Harry's mind was a vast landscape showing all of the memories and experiences he had had. His power core was a large, expandable tank, which had four distinct sections that were interconnected.

She could sense her own power, concentrated in one area of the core. She could sense James' power concentrated in another area. She could sense Harry's small, but quickly growing magical power in a third area of the tank, then there was the fourth section of power – the power that had been stripped from the Avada Kedavra curse was stored over close to the second power core of 'Tom Riddle' that had attached its self to Harry's core, but which was located nearest the place where the Harry seemed now to have a scar.

She was pleased to see that the knowledge that Lily had attempted to send to Harry was represented by a large room that looked much like the Library at Hogwarts, however the books were all on the floor in no particular order.

Encompassing Harry's 'Life-source' (His heart) was a bright multi-layered shield. 'The Blessing of the Heir' 'Lily's Essences' thought. It was comforting to see that it was still intact. You could feel the love that had gone into building the shield, both from Lily, James, and Sirius.

'Bless you Sirius. You saved her son.' The 'Essences' thought.

'I have to build a mental shield here. I cannot let the Headmaster, or anyone else, besides Harry, know that I am here. It appears that Harry is sleeping now. I will take this time to build his first occlumency shields so that he can begin to protect his mind. Then afterward, I will organize the Library so that I can begin teaching Harry when he is ready. '

'Essences' found she could use power from Harry's core, but only within the confines of the landscape she was in.

As she was working on the Library, she could sense another consciousness near her. She stopped what she was doing and turned around as a small boy who looked like Harry, came up to her and asked: "Hello, are you my Mummy?"

'Essences' looked at Harry and said, "No Harry, I am not your Mummy. I am her thought, emotions, and experiences that she had during her lifetime, and I know she loved you with all her heart."

"You look just like her. Are you sure you're not my Mummy? If you are not, what do I call you?"

"Your 'Mummy' is in the great beyond, but I think it would be alright if you called me 'Ma', Okay?"

"Okay."

"What are you doing?" asked little Harry.

"I'm protecting your mind so people can't see me, or see how much information you have stored in your mind."

"Why?"

"Because some people would get very upset to find out that I was here."

"Why?"

"Because they think they know what's best for you and don't want anyone interfering."

"Why?"

"Harry, I can't answer all of your questions right now. I have a lot of work to do. Are you through with your nap yet?"

"No. I still hurt a little bit, and I don't like remembering seeing my Mummy get hit with that green light in the back. She wouldn't wake up for me after."

"I'm sorry honey, come here and let me give you a hug."

In this strange world of thoughts and emotion, Harry and 'Ma' were able to come together, 'feel' and 'touch' each other. 'Ma' gave Harry a motherly embrace. After a few minutes she said: "Why don't you go on and rest now. I know the Headmaster would like to talk to you, but please don't tell him about me, Okay?"

"Kay."

With that Harry went back to the playgrounds in his mind while his body rested.

Scene – Headmasters office

Professor Dumbledore had just received a reply from the Hall of Records regarding James and Lily Potter's will, and if there were any life-debts owed to either James or Lily. It was fortunate that all magically binding contracts were automatically recorded in the Hall of Records.

Professor Dumbledore found two life debts owed to James. One from Severus Snape, and another one from Petunia Evens Dursley.

'Hum. Most interesting. I must ask Severus the nature of this Life Debt someday, but for now it is the Life Debt of Mrs. Dursley that will be most useful to me.' Professor Dumbledore thought to himself. 'I could set the blood-wards there with no problem. I am sure Petunia would treat her sister's son as her own. All I have to do is remind her of the Life Debt she owed to James and that it is now being called due.'

Professor Dumbledore was brought out of his musing by a large Eagle owl bearing the crest of Gringotts bank. It was carrying a letter addressed to him.

Opening the letter it read:

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

Order of Merlin - First Class,

Grand Sorcerer,

Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot,

Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards,

Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Greetings,

We have been made aware of the sudden demise of both James Harold and Lily Evens Potter.

We have also been made aware of your receipt of a copy of their last will and testament from the Hall of Records. So you are aware that they have chosen you to act as the executor of their will in their behalf.

To summarize the contents of the will:

Sirius Black is to be the legal and magical guardian for Harry James Potter. In the case that Mr. Black is not available, then Alice Longbottom, Frank Longbottom, Remus Lupin or Minerva McGonagall are suitable candidates as well. As executor of the will, you are not eligible as a guardian as it would prove to be a conflict of interest.

Under NO condition is Harry to be placed with Petunia Evens Dursley or her family.

Harry is to be given the opportunity to meet his aunt and cousin(s) shortly before his eleventh birthday.

Harry is to have full access to all Family and Personal Vaults. He cannot withdraw any funds from the Family vaults, however, all books, scrolls, articles, artifacts, and portraits are to be at his disposal to help him learn and become a contributing member to the wizarding world.

If at any time Mr. Harry Potter should become the last Potter, as he is now, he is to come immediately to Gringotts to experience the Appointment of the Heir rite and associated rituals.

DO NOT INTERFERE WITH THESE RITES AND RITUALS! THEY WILL HELP HIM ON HIS TRUE PATH!

Moneys and properties are to be distributed as listed in the wills WITH NO VARIATION.

Remember Headmaster, you have been chosen to execute the wishes of James and Lily Potter, not make your own decisions. Dire consequences will befall you if you do not listen to their will and perform your duty quickly and fairly.

Respectfully,

Goldridge.

Senior Vice President, Gringotts.

Dumbledore just laughed at the threats breathed out by the goblins. They were just mad at him because he didn't work harder for normal relations between wizards and goblins.

He knew what was best for young Harry. He was far too young for the Appointment of the Heir rite and rituals.

As the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot, he could act as proxy for the Potter vote until Harry turned 17. He just had to file some forms with the office of the Chief Warlock and everything would be legal – luckily for him, he was the Chief Warlock!

As far as distributing the moneys or properties, well, Remus could use the money and land, but then he wouldn't be as dependent on Albus for what he needs, and he may not be so willing to go on assignments to the werewolves in the different areas to get them to help the 'light' side. The other people in the list were not in as bad of a situation, and what they didn't know wouldn't hurt them.

It was still quite early in the morning of November 1st, so Albus packed up some rune stones, and an Invisible cloak that James had let the Order of the Phoenix use once in awhile. He had to get the wards set up around the Dursley's home before school started this morning.

As he was getting ready to leave, his Deputy, Professor Minerva McGonagall came in to discuss the events of the previous night. She was somewhat surprised to see him getting ready to leave.

"Headmaster! Just where do you think you are going?" She asked.

"Ah Minerva, I am on my way to set up the Blood-wards around Petunia Dursley's home so our young Harry will have somewhere to go tomorrow where he will be safe and sound."

"Are you sure about this Albus? I attended a baby shower for Lily and Petunia at the Dursley's home just before they both delivered their babies; it was not a pleasant experience. I received the distinct impression that Petunia wanted nothing to do with James or Lily, and only tolerated her presents was because her parents were there. Albus, have you even visited with the family?"

"There shouldn't be any problem with that Minerva. It would appear that Petunia owed James a life debt! I'm just seeing that she honors her commitment to him by raising Harry as her own son." Said Dumbledore – without actually answering the question.

"You can't be serious, Albus!" Minerva yelled, "You don't know a thing about them, and your going to just drop this precious little baby on their door steps? I won't have it Albus; there must be another way. What did James' and Lily's will say about this? Minerva asked.

"That I am to use my best judgment as to where Harry should stay." Albus lied.

"I don't know Albus. I'm going to go and watch them just in case. And you better be right about this. I don't think I could face Lily in the next big adventure if anything were to happen to her little Harry."

With that Professor McGonagall left the room to get ready for a day of people watching.

Professor Dumbledore stopped down at the infirmary to get a small amount of blood from Harry to activate the rune stones. He then went to Number 4 Privet Drive in Surrey to place the blood runes at the corners of the housing lot and a second set of protective runes at the edge of Little Whinging in case he went to the park, or store, but the most important protection were the Blood-runes on the

house where the two blood relatives had to live in the same house for two months out of a year to re-charge the wards around the house.

As Professor Dumbledore finished warding the area, he felt very confident that Harry would have a good life out of the eyes of the wizarding world.

A normal childhood where there would be little pressure to live up to the hype that was being generated about 'The Boy-Who-Lived'. Who could ask for anything more.

On that evening November 1st, 1981, after another confrontation with Professor McGonagall, the Headmaster took little Harry from Hagrid, and placed him on the front porch of the Dursley's home with a note to Petunia, reminding her of her life-debt to James, and how that life-debt would be satisfied by raising Harry as her own.

The Headmaster then activated the wards, one of which kept all other witches and wizards away that the Professor did not specifically approve of. Currently, only he and Professor Snape could check on Harry, and that was how he was going to keep it.

If only the Headmaster would have listened to Professor McGonagall, or Hagrid, or Alastor Moody. But he didn't – he was Albus Dumbledore. He knew what was best for everyone.

If only he would have listened, Harry's next 10 years wouldn't have been so bad.

But then, Harry wasn't alone. He just couldn't remember it yet.
End of Chapter 7

Chapter 8 – Harry at the Dursley's

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Petunia started her morning at 7:30 am as usual. There was the newspaper to retrieve, coffee to make, and breakfast to get ready for her two 'handsome' men.

As she opened the front door to retrieve the paper, she saw it. A large wicker basket, covered by a holding blanket, with a note addressed to her on it.

Had someone left a lunch basket here? Oh, that was nice of them. But then she noticed that the note was written, not on paper, but on parchment... the type of parchment that Lily and those kind of people used. Also, instead of the black or blue ink that was so common, this one was written with green ink.

'No!' She thought to herself: 'It just can't be! Why would Lily be sending me her little, ungrateful rug rat? But that handwriting doesn't look like Lily's. Who could it be from?'

Just then Harry stirred in the basket, and let out a little sigh.

That was all it took.

"VERNON! VERNON! COME HERE QUICKLY!" she yelled at the top of her lungs. Right now, she didn't care if the neighbors were looking at her. She needed her husband her NOW!

"What is it Pet? Vernon asked. He had just finished shaving, and wasn't quite ready for the day to begin.

"O... On th... the front stoop!" Petunia got out finally.

Vernon opened the door and saw the wicker basket. Not taking a very close look at it, he picked it up, and brought it into the house.

"Oh! Look, there's a note here for you! It must be from some fancy place if they are using that heavy parchment paper. Who's it from Love? Vernon asked.

As Vernon turned around he was surprised to see that his wife's face was as white as a sheet and her whole body was shaking like a leaf.

Slowly, Petunia took the note in her shacking hands and opened up. As she read it her face went even whiter.

"It's... It's fro... from them." She whispered.

"Them who women! Speak up!" Vernon barked out.

The noise was loud enough that Harry started to stir in the basket.

Vernon jumped back and looked at the basket more closely this time. Carefully he approached the basket, and jerked the blanket off.

"WHO IN THE BLOODY BLUE BLAZES IS THAT AND WHAT IS IT DOING IN MY HOUSE!" Vernon bellowed.

The noise scarred Harry, who was startled by the sudden commotion and started to cry, but not for long.

"It's him isn't it!" Vernon said. "It's that little freaky nephew Henry isn't it!" Vernon shook his big beefy finger at the basket, while his face went from red, to blue, to deep purple.

"His name is Harry, Vernon, and according to this letter from Professor Dumbledore, his parents have been killed by some dark ... you-know-what. Dumbledore says that since I owed James a life-debt when the Death-eaters attacked during the baby shower, I am now honor bound to raise their son as my own. If I don't, Professor Dumbledore says that terrible things will happen to me and my family, but that if I did keep him here, we would be protected." Petunia was still shacking and had to sit down on the sofa in the front room.

Harry for his part, had finished crying, and had crawled over to the side of the basket and watched as they bickered back and forth.

"I don't care what that Dumbdoor says, we are not taking him in! Take him down to the Family Services and have them place him in a family or in an orphanage I REALLY DON'T CARE!" Vernon was quite angry at this point.

"Look Pet, I really don't care what you do with him, but now I'm going to be late for work and it all his fault! Just take him down to Family Services and be done with it!"

"I can't Vernon! I do owe James a life-debt! If he hadn't done what he did, I would have been killed, and little Dudlekums would never have been born!" Petunia was resigning herself to taking care of Harry, but she didn't have to like it.

"Fine! If your set on keeping him, I know just the place to put him!" And with that Vernon grabbed the basket, causing Harry to fall back in, and took it over to the cupboard under the stairs, opened the door, and literally threw the basket with Harry in it inside and slammed the door shut.

"There! If it a good enough place for his mum to put me into, then it's good enough for their son! That's now Harvey's room. And the less I see of him the better!"

"Now, if you don't mine, I need my coffee and breakfast while I finish getting ready! I'll never get to work at this rate! What a fine way to start off a week!"

With that Vernon stormed back upstairs to finish getting ready.

Petunia was still in shock, but knew that if his breakfast wasn't on the table when he got back, there'd be hell to pay.

As she went past the cupboard under the stairs, she could hear little Harry crying, but she knew that she couldn't stop to comfort him, or see if he was alright, or else she wouldn't have Vernon's breakfast ready in time.

Petunia hurried around the kitchen getting everything ready; got it set out on the table, and then realized that the newspaper was still on the front stoop. Running as quickly as she could, she went out, got the paper, and hurried back to the Breakfast table to set the paper out, all ready for her 'sweet' husband.

Vernon came in, ready for work, and sat down at the table to begin his morning ritual as if nothing had happened.

Petunia went back upstairs to finish getting ready and get her sweet little Dudley up.

Even though Dudley was only about a month or so older than Harry, there was a marked difference in their development. Harry could use small sentences; Dudley would only grunt and use hand gestures to get what he wanted. Harry knew how to play fairly with other small children, and loved to play with adults; Dudley had to be the center of attention wherever he was, and didn't know the meaning of the word 'share'.

By the time Petunia got back downstairs with Dudley, Vernon had left for work.

She placed Dudley in his chair, and gave him some cereal to keep his busy while she went to check on Harry.

Opening the cupboard door, she looked in to find Harry back in the basket, holding the blanket in one arm, and sucking his thumb.

"Ouchie" he said as he held up his left hand. Apparently when Vernon threw the basket into the cupboard, Harry fell out, and hit his left hand on the back wall.

Petunia still didn't know how to feel. She had just learned that her sister and brother-in-law had been murdered, and that somehow, this young baby hadn't. Even though Dumbledore stated that Lord 'Voldemort' would no longer be a problem, Petunia worried about people like those Death-eaters that had come during the baby shower would still be around and try to take some revenge on Harry – and anybody that was around him.

She had a decision to make here – how was she going to treat her nephew? Could she treat him as her own son? Look at him, so young and helpless. But he was one of them. One of these freaks that did all of those unnatural things.

It all came down to one thing... Could she love Harry inspite of being different – of being a freak?

It was her chose to make.

She looked at Harry one more time.

"Up?" Harry asked innocently holding both arms out towards her, with a little tear in his eye from his injury.

This was the 'fork in the road'. What path would she take? Looking back at Harry, then back to the kitchen where Dudley was making a racket because no one was paying attention to him. She looked back at Harry and said: "Why should I help you, you little freak! You just stay there out of the way until I get good and ready to get you!"

With that she slammed the door and a twist of the lock on the cupboard under the stairs, Petunia Evans Dursley went back into the kitchen to see her precious little Dudlekums.

Harry was left in the dark room feeling more than a bit bewildered. He may not have understood all of the words, but he knew that tone of voice and he could feel the emotion. It was the tone of hate and anger. Something that he was not accustomed to in his home.

Harry crawled over to the door to his cupboard and pushed on it with his good hand hoping that it would open up. He didn't like being in the dark like that, and he hadn't had his morning nappy changed. He didn't like being wet.

"Mummy? Mummy!" Harry said using his little hand to knock on the cupboard door.

No response.

"Mummy? Mummy!" Harry cried a little louder. He was starting to get scared.

Petunia came out of the kitchen carrying Dudley, slapping the outside of the cupboard door with her hand. 'Be quiet you little brat!' Petunia yelled. The loud noise scared Harry inside the dark cupboard.

"Your mum and dad are dead now and you have to live here with us now! Now be quiet before you upset my sweet little Dudley. AND DON'T CALL ME MUMMY AGAIN!" She yelled.

With that she took Dudley back up stairs to play with him while Harry was left alone.

Harry's chin quivered as he realized that his mummy wasn't there and wouldn't be coming to get him any time soon and that he would be stay here with these mean people.

He couldn't understand what had happened.

Flashback

He remembered being with his parents just a few days before. Then Uncle Wormtail came with that ugly man and started to hurt his mummy and daddy.

He knew that his daddy didn't want the ugly man in the house and was fighting with him while he and mummy went upstairs to his nursery.

Something must have happened to daddy because the ugly man broke the door that mummy had closed and came in the room with Uncle Wormtail – He really don't like Uncle Wormtail.

Mummy had been doing our light game with her stick (expand his magical and mental centers) again like they had done just a few days ago. Harry thought it was strange since they usually only do that once in a long time (at each new moon), and never this close together.

Then Harry remembered mummy doing something she had never done before. She had a new colored light (spell) that hit him more in the head than in the chest. He could see all kinds of shapes and symbols. Words that he didn't know the meaning to; people waving their little sticks – mummy called them a wand – and saying funny words to have different lights come out of the end of the sticks; big 'pots' (cauldrons) where he saw his mummy and other people cut up things and put them in to cook.

It all stopped when the ugly man pointed his stick at mummy, and a sickly green light hit his mummy in the back. Harry felt something extremely painful. Harry remembered his mummy falling over and he couldn't get her to come back up. Is that what this woman meant when she said that mummy was dead?

Then that ugly man came over to Harry and pointed his little stick at him and the sick green light came towards him also. But something happened. Something came out of Harry that hit the green light, and then both lights hit the ugly man in the chest. Something happened. It was like the whole room exploded, and when Harry could see again, Uncle Wormtail grabbed the ugly man's stick and turned into a ugly little animal and ran from the room.

Harry remembered his head and body still hurting, but still he went over to his mummy and tried to wake her up. But he couldn't feel his mummy in her body anymore; He could still feel her, just not in her body. It confused Harry greatly.

The next thing Harry remembered was Uncle Paddy coming in his room and picking him up. Harry really didn't want to leave his mummy and daddy there, but he felt safe with Uncle Paddy, and soon found himself going to sleep against his chest.

Is that when he saw his Mummy? Harry remembers someone that looked just like her somewhere near him. He was sure he talked to her and even asked her questions. He remembered her saying that he needed to go and play while his body recovered. When he woke up he was in a strange place. There were lots of beds here. All of the walls were painted white, and there were lots of 'drapes' around everything. There was a strange lady there who made him feel better; there was a big man who had a big beard that Harry would have loved to have gotten a hold of to see if real, and then there was the old man. He had a beard too, but his was long and gray, like someone's grandfather.

Harry could see the twinkle in the old mans eyes, but every time he looked at Harry, Harry would feel 'pressure' in his head. The pressure never got into his mind, but it still didn't feel pleasant.

That was about all Harry remembered. He ate, slept and basically rested for the remainder of the day. He hadn't seen his Uncle Paddy or Moony and he missed them both right now.

All Harry knew was that when he went to sleep that night, he was in the white room. When he woke up, he was with some strange people yelling at each other over him.

End of Flashback

Harry woke up some time later to find that his nappy had been changed, and a small bowl of dry cereal by the cupboard door. He hurried down and ate the cereal.

After eating, he tried his door again and to his surprise, this time it was open. He got out of his cupboard and looked around to see where he was.

For a 15 month-old baby, Harry could get around pretty well. He could get up and walk, especially if he had something to hold on to, like the wall.

Harry couldn't figure out where he was. It wasn't his home. It wasn't Paddy's home. It wasn't even Neville's home! Harry just hoped it wasn't the home of these mean people he saw this morning.

He soon found the layout of the bottom floor of the house; the front room, living room, kitchen, of course his cupboard, a loo and sink off the kitchen. He couldn't get out the front door; he kind of wanted to see what the place around him looked like.

He made it over to the stairs and started to climb up. Apparently, Petunia had left Dudley in his room playing with all of his toys, while she took a little 'nap'.

Harry looked into Dudley's room and at first, just watched as the much larger child grabbed one toy after another, just to beat it up, tear it apart, and throw it away before grabbing another toy and repeating the same process.

Harry was lucky that there were still some almost-complete toys that had landed by the door. He just came quietly around the corner and picked up one of the army men, that still had one leg and one arm attached. This was great fun! But all of that suddenly came to an abrupt end.

A large shadow fell over Harry, and a big pudgy hand came down and jerked the toy away from him.

"NO!" Dudley said, and pushed him away from the toy.

"Sourry." Harry said quietly, and then he reached for another one of the broken toys lying on the floor.

"NO!" Dudley said again, and took that toy also.

"Play?" Asked Harry.

"NO! MINE!" Said Dudley, he tried to push Harry away and started to yell at the top of his lungs.

Harry had never had anybody that didn't want to play with him. He was sad and confused, and started to cry.

The commotion woke Petunia from her nap. She came in to the room very upset. From past experience, Harry thought that the child causing the disturbance would be the one disciplined. So he was a little surprised again when Petunia picked HIM up, and gave HIM a swat on the backside, and started yelling at HIM.

"Oh, so your going to be a little trouble maker are you? You know how to get out of your room now do you? It's not enough that I have to change and feed you, but you are going to make me have to watch you too so that you don't get into trouble now is that right? Well, I know how to fix that. I'll just keep your little room locked up except for when I check on you and feed you in the morning and at night. AND YOU HAD BETTER NOT CAUSE ME ANY MORE TROUBLE WITH MY DUDLEY!" She yelled.

All the time she had been talking, she had been shacking him, and carrying him down the stairs and back to his little cupboard under the stairs, puts him in the room – rather roughly, closing, and locks the door.

Harry went back to his little basket, sad, crying, and feeling all alone. He is wondering why these people are acting this way to him? What had he done to deserve this kind of treatment? If his mummy and daddy are 'dead' he guesses that that means they cannot come and get him. But what about Uncle Paddy, or Moony, could one of them come and get him?

Little did Harry know, but at that very moment, Sirius Black had cornered Peter Pettigrew on a street corner full of muggles in the middle of London, But it would be Wormtail that would get the better

of Padfoot that day, and pull a prank of a lifetime on him! And what a prank it would be! It's not everyday where a prank not only makes you look like a hero, but could also cost your rival (Sirius in this case) the rest of his life in the Wizarding prison Azkaban.

Meanwhile in Harry subconscious

Lily's essences was absolutely livid!

Her own family... her own flesh and blood, treating her... Lily's child as if he was dirt! She could not let this go on.

Lily's essences did consider herself to be 'Lily' for all intents and purposes. She had Lily's thoughts, experience, feelings, everything that was Lily.

Everything that Lily had or was; except her body and her soul.

Lily's essences knew that the 'Soul' part of the equation was very important, but in some ways, she was glad that she didn't have a soul.

There were two main reasons for this:

One – she was not technically 'possessing' Harry. She did not have control of him. You could only possess someone if you had a soul.

Two - the fact that without a soul, she wouldn't have to experience feeling bad for the decisions she would have to make in how she acted. Don't misunderstand; Lily's essences knew the difference between good from evil, right from wrong, love, hate and the rest of emotions. It just that she didn't have a conscious to make her feel bad about her decisions.

Right now Lily's essences had two major problems:

One – get the information transferred from Harry's mother in a usable, protected state and

Two – contact Harry to let him know that he is loved, and that there are some things he can do to stay away from the Dursley's.

Her first challenge was getting the information organized for Harry.

Lily's essences knew that she had to get this organization done quicker, but how? How could she automate the sorting and storing of knowledge to something where the information would be protected, but also easy to access and retrieve?

Lily's essences had seen when she first came into 'existence', she could tell that a part of Lily's memory's had been 'covered' or 'hidden' from her.

Taking a few moments to look at these 'hidden' memories, Lily's essences was shocked at what she found! Bound Magical Cores! Ministries knowledge of the action! Dumbledore's part in the conspiracy! Masked Amulets! Shrunk trunks! Power transfer spells! Spells to detect the bind on a magical core, and Spells to remove the binding! If Lily's essences thought she couldn't get any madder then she was with her 'sisters' behaviour towards Harry, she was wrong! She could be a lot madder at Dumbledore and the Ministry right now.

But how was she going to get this information organized and into Harry's hands?

She thought about what James had shown Lily on their tour of the trunk he had found that his father had had made. In chamber 3 was a magnificent Library and indexing tome. Could Lily's essences' uses something like that to collect, organize, index, cross reference, and then have it be 'recalled' at a moments notice? What would you call something like that?

How about a 'knowledge sphere'?

But what is a 'knowledge sphere? Up until this instant to Lily's essences knowledge, no one had even thought of a 'knowledge sphere'

As Lily's essences envisioned it, the 'knowledge sphere' would be like having all of these books, references, and knowledge from Lily in an 'electronic file cabinet'. It would be stored in many inner and outer layers. This sphere and the shields would all be powered by Harry's core – meaning he would always have to hold some power in reserve to keep the shields and sphere in tacked.

Lily's essences didn't know what Harry's current power rating would be, but if he was the one that was conjuring the little wolf puppy and changing Sirius' cloths at his first birthday party – wandlessly and wordlessly – he had to be extremely powerful, so keeping the sphere wouldn't be a problem.

The outer layers of the sphere would be like a strong occlumency shields, combined with a language spell, to translate the book, scroll, or even conversation from it's native language, to English. There would also be active scanning spells that could decipher the contents of books, scrolls, and memories and connect it to a master index charm that would basically contain the location of every word or image contained in the sphere.

Inside the sphere would be more occlumency like organized areas.

First it would be broken-down in the basic areas of study in magic: Alchemy, Animagus Training, Arithmancy, Aura Reading, Auror Training Manual years 1 through 5, Battle Magic, Battle Strategy, Care for Magical Animals, Charms, DADA, 'Dark' Magic, Elemental Magic, Etiquette in the Wizarding World, Herbology, History of Charms, History of Hogwarts, History of Magic, History of Spells, Hit Wizard Training and Ethics, Muggle Studies, NEWT's Testing Standards, Occlumency and Legilimens, OWL's Testing Standards, Physical Training, Potions, Runes, Strategy, Transfiguration, Unspeakable Training, Who's who in the Wizarding World, Wizarding Law, and Wizarding Sports. To name a few.

There would also be a section of the sphere that would take care of the muggle subjects that he would have to learn and know, such as: English, Math, Social Science, Geography, Chemistry, Physics etc. This would help him in his muggle schoolwork, and be able to think 'outside the box' in the magic world when faced with difficult problems.

The master control sphere would actually be in the center of the entire complex since it required the most protection, and it needed to monitor the contents, and conditions of the other shielded areas.

Working from the outside of the 'knowledge sphere' in, there would be multiple 'Warding' shields just to protect the contents of the spheres.

Aside from the anti-magic type wards that would be in place, the first defensive sphere would be represented as a steep mound of dirt with pointed poles at the top of the rise.

Next would be a moat filled with water, and several 'interesting' creatures to attack anyone who made it that far. Don't try to drain or freeze the moat, you wouldn't like the results.

Then there would be a stonewall several meters thick, covered by thick poisonous thorns and a devil's snare type plant that doesn't mind the sun – or light for that matter which would make the wall all but impossible to climb. This would be a 'double' wall, that is, if the outer wall is breached, the 'filler' between the two walls would start coming out. The 'filler' in this case would be magical animals, snakes, and small dragons to keep the attacker busy while the wall rebuilt itself.

This stonewall would completely enclose the other inner spheres. This means top, and bottom, and all sides.

If you were to get past this defense, then you faced a flying armada of Chinese Fireball's dragons and a five-foot thick steel encased structure.

Even if you got in, you had to worry about getting back out because the defensive shields were repairing and replacing themselves.

That should do for defense for now. Now what was actually in the protected area?

First would be the translation charms. One for every known language in the wizarding and muggle world. As soon as the language had been identified, and the work translated, the information would be sent to the sorting and indexing charms that would route information to the correct inner sphere.

If the outer spheres could not determine the subject area of the information coming into them, a special holding location would be created where the 'data' would be stored until enough other information found to where an interpretation could be made.

Lily's essences were just about to start the creation of the 'knowledge sphere' when she remembered that many texts have hidden writing,

or quite nasty curses on them if not handled properly. So she decided to include a 'reveal' charm that would show any hidden writing, and a 'protection detection' spell to determine – before hand if a curse were on a given book or scroll.

There were four primary charms Lily's essences would be using to populate the sphere:

potatus informatio intro chartea (absorb - soak up information in book)

potatus informatio intro carta (absorb - soak up information in scroll) and

didici intro chartea (acquire knowledge of in book)

didici intro carta (acquire knowledge of in scroll)

She didn't know which spell would be more efficient, so she would try them all, until one (or two) came out to be the best.

Lily's essences was going to call her little project 'Applejack'.

Lily's essences realized that she could not do everything by herself, and since she was nothing more than the result of a spell, couldn't she duplicate the effort by using a similar spell? She had already seen that she could do magic here in the subconscious. So tapping into Harry's power, she said 'septem exempli meus' (seven copies / reproductions of me).

Immediately there came into existence seven identical copies of Lily's essences.

'I need you to take care of directing the books, scroll's, experience, and knowledge from Lily's memory into the knowledge sphere. I have to try and get Harry here so we can talk.' With that the other automatons went to work, knowing exactly what they were to do. It would still take time, but once handled, all of the information would be present, and accessible to her and Harry.

It would take many years, if not decades for Harry to understand the information contained in the sphere, but Lily's essences was going to do everything in her power to see that he knew it all.

Now, on to the second problem: what was she going to do about her (Lily's) sister and Dudley?

The first thing she had to figure out was some way to contact Harry.

She knew that when he was in a deep sleep, he was able to enter the outer portion of the subconscious to where she could talk to him. Now she had to find a way to extend the reach, so that while Harry was a sleep, she could 'visit' him and tell him of the love that his mother and father felt for him.

Lily's essences decides to see just how far she can go to contact Harry. As she walks out over the landscape that is Harry's subconscious, she begins to see what looks like a border. A dark void that was only interrupted by the flashing of synapses firing off – sending messages back and forth to the different parts of Harry's brain.

She gets as close as she can and extends her hands. The barrier is real. Lily's essences was still aware of everything that is happening to Harry, that he is back in the cupboard, that he had been crying, and that his left wrist still hurts from when Uncle Vernon throw him in the cupboard.

'Why didn't the Blessing of the Heir charm fully protect Harry when he was put in here?' She thought to herself.

In reviewing the incident from this morning, the charm had protected Harry when Vernon threw him in. It was after, when Harry tried to get out of the basket, that he fell over and hurt his wrist.

'It would appear that the charm only works when you are being attacked, or harmed by an outside force. I'll have to remember that for the future.'

Getting back to how she was going to communicate with Harry, Lily's essences had an idea.

Placing her hands on the barrier, and speaking she said, "Harry? Harry? I need you to rest little one. Please come lie down in the basket and rest for a few minutes, I have some things to tell you and I can only do it when you're asleep."

She could tell that Harry was confused. He could hear her, or something, but he didn't know how to respond. Lily's essences tried again, "Harry? I need you to rest little one. Please come lie down on the blanket and rest for a few minutes?"

Harry was still confused, but he had stopped crying. It appeared that he was trying to see where the voice was coming from.

Lily's essences thought back to how Lily used to put Harry down for his nap. Most of the time there would be a bottle of milk or juice, his favorite blanket and toy, and then a lullaby from Lily until he fell asleep.

Well, Lily's essences didn't have a bottle, or a toy, and the only blanket that he had was the one that covered the basket when it was delivered. Lily's essences hoped that if she started to sing, Harry would respond by going to the closest thing he had for a crib, and would take the blanket and go to sleep. Only then could she hope to 'direct' Harry back to her to where she could talk to him.

She started singing:

Sleep my child and peace attend thee,
All through the night
Guardian angels God will send thee,
All through the night
Soft the drowsy hours are creeping,
Hill and dale in slumber sleeping
I my loved ones' watch am keeping,
All through the night

Angels watching, e'er around thee,
All through the night
Midnight slumber close surround thee,
All through the night
Soft the drowsy hours are creeping,
Hill and dale in slumber sleeping
I my loved ones' watch am keeping,
All through the night

Harry took the suggestion and came over to the basket, and even though he was hungry, took the blanket, curled up, and went to sleep.

After Harry was asleep, Lily's essences started calling for Harry to come to her.

She could tell that Harry was confused, but he tried to head to the direction that his name was being called from.

There were many setbacks, as Harry would go back to the night when Voldemort killed his mother and father. He reacted as any infant would: with shock and horror. Lily's essences had to call out to Harry many times to comfort and reassure him that the 'Ugly man' was gone, and that he could not hurt him any more.

After the better part of an hour, Lily's essences sensed Harry approaching her.

'Heawo' Harry said. 'Are you my Mummy?'

This was the same first question that Harry had asked the last time he visited her.

Lily's essences looked at Harry and said, "No Harry, I am not your Mummy. I am her thought, emotions, and experiences that she had during her lifetime, and I know she loved you with all her heart."

"You look just like her. Are you sure you're not my Mummy? If you are not, what do I call you?"

"Your 'Mummy' is in the great beyond, but I think it would be alright if you called me 'Ma', Okay?"

"Okay."

'Do you remember asking me the same questions the last time you saw me?' 'Ma' asked.

'Yes, but I thought that was just a dream.' Harry was a bit confused. (A/N baby talk omitted, but Harry is still only 15 months old. I hope to keep him in character)

'It was in a dream Harry. Right now that's the only way I have of talking to you. Your mind is not strong enough to find me any other time then when you are sleeping.'

'Harry, I have some important things to talk to you about Okay?'

'Okay.' Harry replied.

'Harry, something very bad has happened to your mother and father. Do you remember what happened on Halloween night?'

'Uncle Wormtail came to the house with a bad man and... and... and he killed mummy and daddy. What does kill mean?'

'It means that their spirit or soul and body are separated from each other. The body can't live without a soul inside. How did that make you feel?'

'Sad, I want my mummy and daddy back! Can you bring them back?' Harry cried.

'No Harry, I can't bring them back. But I can do this. I can let you know that you mummy and daddy loved you a great deal. In fact it was your mothers love for you that created me!' 'Ma' said. 'Her last wish was for you to know you were loved unconditionally and she used all of her magic, and some of yours, to create me so that I would have all of your mothers thoughts, feelings, emotions, and experiences. I KNOW how much your mother loved you. She loved you with all her heart. She loved you so much that she was willing to die in your place instead of you, but Voldemort just killed her, and then tried to kill you also, but he wasn't able to.'

'The reason he could not kill you was because of a blessing you first received when you were first born, and that blessing was repeated several hundred times over the next 15 months of your life.'

'The charm is called 'The Blessing of the Heir'. It was given to you by someone else who loves you a great deal, that is you Godfather, Sirius Black.'

'Paddy?' Harry asked. 'Can I see Paddy soon? Or Moony?'

'I don't know Harry; I don't know where Padfoot went to or why you have to stay here instead of with Padfoot. I know that Lily and James – your mummy and daddy – wanted you to go to Sirius if anything happened to them.'

'And that brings me to the next important thing.'

'It seems a though you are going to be here with Lily's sister Petunia and her family for some time. Again, I don't know why. Lily gave strict instructions to Professor Dumbledore, and in her will that you were never to be placed here. In fact, you were only to meet them after you turned 11 years old.'

'But right now, we have to do something to prevent you from being starved or beat-up, and getting your nappy changed.'

'This is what I want you to do. I want you to ask Aunt Petunia that if she will feed you and change your nappies three times a day, that you will learn to go to the loo all by yourself as soon as you can, and that for the rest of the time, you'll stay in your room, out of her way. This way if you're resting, we can visit more and I can help you learn. Then in the spring and summer, you can ask Aunt Petunia if you can stay outside, but in the yard. I want you to look around the yard a little bit for me when it gets warmer. Dumbledore must have put some protection wards up to keep you safe. But remember, you can't let anyone know I'm here okay? How does that sound?'

'Okay, I guess – but I still miss my mummy and daddy. Could you hold me for a moment?'

'I'll try as best as I can.' Was 'Ma's reply.

So the essences of Lily, and the essences of Harry came together for a second 'hug'.

It made Harry feel much better knowing that somebody loved him, but at the same time, he could tell that something was missing from the essences of Lily. He couldn't feel her Soul – her 'Heart' was missing, even though he could tell that 'Ma' loved him to as best she could.

It took several days for Harry to successfully communicate to Aunt Petunia about how he would stay out from under foot, and even

though she was not thrilled about having to change or feed him, she was agreeable with him staying out of sight.

'Ma' just didn't let Harry sleep while he was in his cupboard. She taught him something called 'Greet the Sun' that he had to do every morning. She had him do it so that his muscles wouldn't shrink, and he would stay limber.

Next 'Ma' taught Harry how to 'breathe' of all things, stating that it would help him be more aware of his body and balance.

After that came 'Meditation'. 'Ma' said that this was to help her communicate with Harry as well as help him organize his mind and help build 'shields' around his mind, so that he would be better protected, and be able to remember more things, while not letting things like Uncle Vernon and Dudley upset me.

Christmas time was very hard for Harry. He could see the tree, and the presents – so many presents – under the tree; he just knew that one of them had to be for him. But when he made the mistake of coming out of his cupboard on Christmas morning to open his present, he was yelled at by Vernon.

"Why should anyone give you a present? Presents are for good little girls and boys like our Dudley here. Not for some freak that only exists to take food from our table, and cloths off our sons back! Now GET BACK IN THAT CUPBOARD, and just for your smart mouthing, NO DINNER FOR YOU!"

Harry just couldn't understand what he had done to make Uncle Vernon so mad. He hardly ever saw him, and when he did, Uncle Vernon was always mad at him.

Harry just went back into his cupboard and cried himself to sleep.

Of course when he went to sleep, he would visit 'Ma' and talked with her about how he felt, and what he should do.

It was decided that for right now, it was best to just try to avoid Uncle Vernon, and see if by 'laying low' he could avoid the conflict.

As winter turned to spring, Harry approached Aunt Petunia to see if he could go outside. He promised that he would stay in the yard,

and he wouldn't make a mess. Aunt Petunia's only concern was to make sure that no one noticed him while he was out there.

'I will not let any of the neighbors notice me.' Harry thought. And with that he went outside.

'Ma' had wanted Harry to look or rather, 'feel' for the magic around Number Four Privet Drive. She was sure Dumbledore had put up some kind of protection around the house, but she wasn't sure what it would be.

As Harry went outside, he stopped, and closed his eyes. He was concentrating on the environment around him. He could sense the air around him, the trees, flowers, grass, and other plants. He could sense the stone fence at the back of the yard. It was here in the stone fence that Harry also sensed something else, something very powerful and... red?

As Harry approached one of the corners, he put his little hands on the stone and again closed his eyes. This time he was concentrating on the stone that has a red picture on it. You couldn't see the picture or the red color; in fact, the stone was actually below the ground level. He stayed there for several minutes until he could remember everything about the stone, the pictures, and where the red was.

Harry repeated the same process on the remaining three corners of the property.

On the left front corner, Harry found that the stone used to put the pictures on was not completely buried under the ground. There was a small 'hole' in the shield about three fourths of an inch above the ground.

Harry was joined there by some very smart looking, flat-faced cats that seemed interested in what Harry was doing. This was the first time Harry had had an animal close to him since Padfoot. He welcomed the company for as long as they would stay.

Aunt Petunia was on the front porch just waiting to yell at Harry for something. She was so caught up in looking at Harry, that she didn't notice Mrs. Miller from Number 6 coming down the street. Everyone knew that Mrs. Miller was the Queen of gossip on Privet drive.

"Well Petunia, it's a bit surprising to see you out here out here so early in the season. Are you looking to see what you have to do to get the best lawn award this year? I must say; that fence is looking a little dungy."

"Oh, Susan! I'm sorry I didn't see you. I was just trying to make sure my nephew didn't make a mess out here."

"Your nephew? Where? All I see out here is you and I and one of the ugly cats from down around the corner at Mrs. Figg's house." Mrs. Miller responded.

"You mean you can't... I mean... what I meant was." She was looking right at Harry and he was looking back, listening to the conversation. "We have been raising my nephew since his parents died... in a... car crash. And try as I might, there is no controlling him. I was just looking at the yard hoping that he doesn't tear thing up." Petunia hoped she had recovered enough to make the story sound acceptable.

"Oh," said Mrs. Miller, only half convinced. "Why that's a mighty Christian act your doing there. I hope everything goes well with you. I'll be seeing you later Petunia." And with that she was gone.

"Harry, come over here now!" Petunia growled.

"What's the matter Aunt Petunia?" Harry was honestly wondering what the problem was.

Petunia grabbed Harry's arm and pulled him inside the house.

"What do you mean 'What's the matter'? You know perfectly well what the problem is! Why couldn't Mrs. Miller see you when you were outside just now?"

"You told me you didn't want the neighbors to see me, and so I told myself that the neighbors would not be able to see me and they couldn't. The little kitty could see me, but the lady could not." Harry answered honestly.

He was quite surprised when his aunt took him forcefully to his cupboard and threw him in, and then locked the door.

"I'll have none of your freakishness here young man. For that you will stay in your room all day, and maybe tomorrow as well!" And with that Aunt Petunia locked the door and left.

Harry had resigned himself to this type of action from the Dursley's now. It didn't bother him though. 'Ma' had been working with him so that when everyone had gone to bed, Harry could go up to the door, envision in his mind that the door was unlocked, and then go out and get something to eat, or go to the bathroom, or what every he needed to do. He always made sure that the room was locked again when the Dursley's came down the next morning.

This type of treatment continued throughout the years.

At age three and a half, Petunia and Vernon felt that it was time that Harry start earning his keep by cooking.

The first few attempts were disasters, but after a few lessons from 'Ma', Harry turned into a better cook then Petunia – Lily had always been better in 'domestic skill'.

Whenever Harry did get outside, he would get as close as he could to the 'Blood runes' as 'Ma' called them. He always felt that the magic feeling inside of him felt stronger when he spent time by the runes. 'Ma' explained that, yes, his magical core were still growing, and that his being by strong magical items, Harry could absorb some of the energy, and continue to expand his core.

By the time Harry turned five, he could have passed for a seven year old.

That year, Uncle Vernon decided that if Harry was going to be outside so much, he could take care of the responsibilities outside, as well has the cooking and cleaning on the inside.

Harry really didn't mind the work. It kept his body fit and active. He found that it was easier to do magic if he was in shape. He did feel rather bad that it didn't seem like there was anyone else in the house that really worked. Aunt Petunia spent all day either gathering, or telling gossip about different people in the neighborhood, while Dudley just spent the majority of his time in front of a telly, or playing computer games.

Also in his fifth year, 'Ma' told Harry a little bit more about the early life. Including the ritual his parents would perform on the days of a new moon where they would expand his magical core, and then, after he was a year old, the mental expansion spell that would increase the number of synapses in the brain, to allow the transfer of information between the two hemispheres more efficient. She also told him about the energy transfer that they would do, but that how that was impossible now since there was no person to transfer their power to him.

"Ma', didn't you say that my core absorbs the extra energy from the Blood rune wards?"

'Yes I did Harry, why?'

"What if I could focus all four stones to a central location and absorb the energy that way?"

'How would you draw the focus to one point Harry?'

"When you mentioned the Fidelius charm, you said that there was a charm 'conduco fidelius' (draw / bring together the Fidelius), will, what if instead of 'conduco fidelius', you use 'conduco maga scutum' (draw / bring together the magical shield)?"

'Very interesting, but how would you focus your magic to the point that you could cast your magic on the blood runes?'

"I've been practicing doing simple things like 'Wingardium Leviosa' on a single leaf as well as all the grass clippings on the yard, I think I can connect all four corners and do this."

'Well, the next full moon is on the 16th of August. It starts at 10:06 AM, we could do the exporrigo magus umbilicus (Expand (the) magical center) and the exporrigo affectio meminisse (Expand the mind) spells, and then wait until that evening to try your spell.' 'Ma' suggested.

"That sounds just great to me." Harry was excited to see just what would happen.

August 16th 1985

Harry decided to wait until 12:00 Midnight to try the new spell.

Earlier that day, Harry had found out just how hard it is to cast a spell on yourself without a wand.

He had to concentrate on his mind or his magical core until he could clearly see them in his mind, then focusing his magic, out of his core, into his hands, and then back into the core, with the incantation. Once Harry got that down for the Magical core, he had to be careful that he didn't get into an unrecoverable feedback loop, where his own magic would keep on coming into him until he ruptured his own magical core. At a minimum, it would kill him, worse case; it would level a city block or more.

Harry started slowly, checking his core, and the amount of energy that was required to expand the core its self. By visualizing the core during this process, Harry could see if there were portions of the core that was not expanding as rest of the core and concentrate on those areas so that everything would be expanded the same, and there wouldn't be any weak spots in the core.

After several minutes, Harry felt satisfied with the endeavor he had made.

Doing the second charm wasn't as hard as the first, but it still was very hard. Harry spent most of the day resting on top of one of the runes in the back yard.

At 12:00 Midnight, Harry got out of his cupboard and went to the backyard to the center of the rune stones and started to concentrate on the task at hand.

He sent out his magical senses to encompass the four markers on each of the corners, and instead of going from one corner to the next, Harry 'grabbed hold' of all four runes, and shouted within his mind 'conduco maga scutum'!

He felt his magic grab on to the Blood rune magic, and the excess magic building up along the connections. Mentally, he opened the leads to the magic, like a power cord – wide open – ALL AT ONCE.

Like grounding four large power generators AT ONE POINT, AT ONE TIME. The basic effect was to short out the Blood rune wards

around Number Four Privet drive, and put all the power through Harry's connections!

The magical power that hit Harry all at once was incredible. In a matter of mille-seconds, Harry had more power flow through him than he thought possible. If his core hadn't been so large and flexible, it would have killed him.

The power shock hit Harry so hard, that he was blown out of the way, and thus, broke the connections from the blood rune stones.

With the power connect broken, the runes again re-established the Blood wards over the house, and started to work. After several seconds, everything was working correctly.

Harry laid on the ground for a few seconds checking out if he was still in one piece. After he determined that yes, everything was still intact, including a fully charged magical core; he slowly made his way back to his cupboard, and collapsed to sleep.

Headmaster's office Hogwarts school of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Bells and whistles are blasting in the Headmasters office. The wards around Number Four Privet Drive have just fallen, but how? These are the strongest wards put up by the strongest wizard in the known world! The power that would be required to do something like that is almost off the chart.

The fact that ALL FOUR Blood runes failed at the same time would be totally unheard of.

Albus had to get to the Dursley's house as quickly as possible.

Just as Albus was going over to ask Fawkes to take him to the Dursley's, the alarms turned off, and the devices started acting as if nothing had happened.

Was this a false alarm?

Albus stopped and walked over to the devices. After casting a diagnostic charm over each of the devices, he came to the conclusion that the devices were acting properly, and that Harry was still within the wards. So, WHAT BROUGHT THE WARDS DOWN?

Even if it were for just a few seconds that would be enough for someone to get into the house and cause harm to Harry.

"Fawkes my old friend, would you be so kind as to take me to Number Four Privet Drive?"

Fawkes let out a trill, which sounded a bit like a laugh, almost like he knew something the Headmaster didn't.

Lifting off his perch, Fawkes offered the Headmaster a feather, and then in an instance they were gone in a ball of flame.

Arriving in the back yard of Number Four Privet Drive, Professor Dumbledore had his wand out – ready for action. Fawkes flew off and landed in a fruit tree, and started helping himself to some of the ripe fruit.

Professor Dumbledore was casting spell after spell trying to see if there were other magical people in the area, were there other magical objects close by that could account for the wards failing, what was the status of each of the blood runes at the current time? Everything came back as the Professor had expected.

Looking on the lawn, Professor Dumbledore noticed a spot here it looked as if someone had been standing, and then fell down. He could see that the person had to literally crawl into the house. Could that have been Harry? Could he somehow have shorted out the wards?

Professor Dumbledore let himself in to the Dursleys home and using a 'Point me' charm found where Harry was sleeping. He was a bit surprised when he opened the cupboard under the stairs to find Harry there.

'Well, obviously, Harry couldn't make it back to his room, and so he decided to sleep here.' He thought. If he had taken a moment to look around, he would have noticed that all of Harry's things were in the cupboard. This was his room!

Professor Dumbledore decided to test Harry again to see if he were strong enough to have shorted out the ward.

Casting the magnitudo de magica charm again, he got the same results as before, the cloud floated over Harry had, but the numbers kept on jumping around – 37, 98, 17, 115. Oh that last number was a good sight to see. It meant that Harry's magical core was growing, and that he should be a standard powered wizard by the time he got to Hogwarts. If he still had trouble with his core fluctuating, he would consult Madam Pomfrey to see what they could do to get it stable.

Coming to the conclusion that everything was all right, and that Harry was in no danger, Professor Dumbledore went back outside, called for Fawkes, and headed back to Hogwarts.

August 17th, late afternoon

Harry was painfully aware of his surroundings. He was being woken up in his subconscious, with a very 'pissed off' looking 'Ma'.

She was standing over him with her hands on her hips and fire in her eyes.

'HARRY JAMES POTTER! WHAT IN THE WORLD WERE YOU THINKING!'

Harry had heard of things called howlers; he was currently on the receiving end of one right now.

'Oh, 'Ma', not so loud please! My head (and the rest of my body) is killing me. Can you tell me what happened?' Harry was confused, but was willing to learn.

'Instead of pulling off the surplus energy from the Blood rune wards, you tried to take in ALL of the power that the Blood rune wards generate! Your lucky you weren't fried to a crisp!' But it did wonders for your magical core.'

'If it weren't for the fact that you had been expanding your core already, you would have surely died. As is, it increased another 45 percent over what you had expanded it this morning.'

'You are not doing that again next month. I mean, you can do the charms, but you are not tapping into those Blood runes until your magical core has a chance to recover. We also need to look at getting you a wand so you can better control your magic.' 'Ma' said,

'Now come on, finish resting. You have a lot to do before you are ready to go to your Primary school in a few weeks.'

After he and Dudley had started going to Reception in the Primary school in the neighborhood, 'Ma' started teaching Harry little things like the 'ABC' song, or how to count, or 'Itsy Bitsy Spider'. That one was fun because of the spiders that were in the cupboard with him.

The rest of the Dursley family did not think it was so fun. Almost immediately Harry started getting notes from the school expressing how pleased the teachers were of his preparation and work ethics, while Dudley received letters of reprimand several times each week. They all made it a point to make Harry's life as difficult as possible.

The Dursleys were convinced that Harry was using his 'freakishness' on the teachers so that they would love him, and punish Dudley. It soon became apparent that whenever Dudley brought home a reprimand note, Harry would be punished. If Vernon or Petunia were called to the school for discipline action on Dudley, Harry would get it three times as bad when they got home.

After a great deal of talking by Harry to his teachers, they stopped sending reports home regarding Harry's work – At least he wouldn't have to suffer for those. But he couldn't do anything about Dudley's reports, so he just resigned himself for the yelling and abuse he would get whenever Dudley acted up at school.

Another problem was when report cards came out. Harry was near the top of his class in almost every subject – but then you don't really do all that much in Primary School. Harry had to plead with his teachers to give him no more than an 'Acceptable' on his card. Even with that he knew he would be in trouble when he got home.

End of Chapter 8

Essences of Lily – Chapter 9 – Harry in Muggle School.

Repost:

Harry was starting Year 1 in school and he couldn't be happier.

During his time at the Dursley's he didn't have the opportunity to meet any other persons his same age – Dudley doesn't count.

Aunt Petunia was very reluctant to let Harry go to school. 'What if he does something to draw attention to himself? What if the school finds out about his freakish nature?'

Uncle Vernon had the solution for that.

"Boy! Come here!" Uncle Vernon bellowed.

"Yes Uncle Vernon." Harry answered politely.

"Don't give me any of your lip boy!" Vernon snarled. "You're going to be in public with 'normal' people now. I expect you to act completely 'normal' also. No disappearing, and the reappearing or anything like that. Do you understand?"

"Yes Uncle Vernon, no doing ma..."

"DON'T SAY THAT WORD IN MY HOUSE OR IN MY PRESENCE!" Uncle Vernon bellowed. "THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS MAGIC!" Uncle Vernon's current color of deep purple looked quite fetching on his face.

"Denying the existence of a thing does not make it cease to exist. It just closes off our minds to the possibilities that are out there in the universe." Harry answered calmly.

"Why you ungrateful little brat..." Uncle Vernon charged at Harry, with his hand raised, intent on doing serious bodily harm. Harry just stood there waiting for the attack. When Uncle Vernon was close enough to swing his fist, a shield appeared in front of Harry that not only stopped the fist, but also stopped Uncle Vernon cold in his tracks. The results were, Uncle Vernon 'bouncing' off the shield, losing his balance, and falling in a heap on the floor, and one very sore fist.

"Why you little freak! Attack me will you? GET OUT OF MY HOUSE!"

"We can't do that Vernon, he's just a child. And I have a life-debt to pay off to his father. If we don't keep him here, what protection will we have from those freaks that are trying to kill him?" Petunia said quietly.

Vernon was breathing very hard right now. More than anything else he wanted to be rid of Harry Potter. He couldn't look at the boy without thinking of his dead mother and father. He knew that somehow, their deaths were his fault. But he didn't want to be defenseless against the type of people who could kill you just by pointing a stick at you.

"Just stay out of my sight then boy! The only time I want to see you is at mealtime. And even then, the less time I see you the better! Now go on, get to school!" Shouted Vernon.

Harry gathered up the worn backpack that he had inherited from Dudley and started walking to school. It was about a kilometer from his house, and so it would take him about 10 minutes to walk there. Of course Aunt Petunia would drive Dudley to school; he couldn't be seen arriving with Harry.

Arriving at school, Harry found out that he and Dudley had both been assigned to Miss. Moon's class located in the southwest corner of the school. Next door, to the east of her room, was Miss. Harrison, a strict disciplinarian who took great pleasure in smacking children on the hands or top of the head if they did not respond to her requests immediately.

Getting to the classroom just before the last bell rang; Harry took the only chair left – right in front of the teacher's desk.

Harry actually looked quite good in Dudley's old cloths. As he would put the cloths on, he would think to himself that the cloths needed to fit him, and as if by 'the M word', the cloths would morph to his size when he put them on. They were still old, and worn, but at least they fit.

Miss. Moon went through the roll and asked the children to take out a pencil while she passed out some paper.

Harry raised his hand and waited for Miss. Moon to call on him.

"Yes Harry?"

"Excuse me ma'am, but I don't have a pencil."

"Didn't your parents get you any supplies?"

"No, ma'am, my parents are dead. I'm staying with my Aunt and Uncle, the Dursleys."

"Well then, Dudley, do you have a pencil Harry could use?"

"Let that freak uses one of my pencils? I don't think so, my Mum and Dad gave me these to use, not HIM!"

"Now Dudley, that's not a very nice thing to say about your cousin now is it? Just let him use it for the test and he can give it back to you." Miss Moon was quite shocked by Dudley's response.

"Huh, fat chance. Who knows what he would do to the pencil after he touched it! I don't share anything with him at home, why should I be made to share anytime with him here? It was his parents that got themselves killed and him left on our front porch. He's nothing but a burden to our family and a freak! I won't share my pencils with him!" Dudley was repeating what he had heard his father say over, and over again and even if he didn't understand everything that he said, he knew that his father would be proud of him for putting Harry down in public.

For Harry's part, he just sat up in the front of the class with his head held down, a little tear coming from the corner of his eye. He didn't want Dudley's words to hurt him, but they did. If it had just been Harry and the Dursley's, he would have thought nothing of it. But here he was on the first day of school, meeting his teacher and the other 20 some students for the first time, and Dudley used the opportunity to let everyone know that he was a different.

Miss. Moon was still in shock with Dudley's attitude, but decided to address it at a later date. Turning to the class, she asked if anyone had a pencil that Harry could use.

A simple looking girl named Alice, who was sitting next to Harry, said that he could have one of hers.

Harry was still blushing when he took the pencil, and thanked her.

Miss. Moon returned to the front of the room and told the class that they were going to have a review. Most of the student moaned about having a test on the first day of school. No one was louder in their complaining, then Dudley.

"This is not a test. This is just to see how prepared you are to do your first year work."

"Put your name on the top of the paper. On the first two lines, I want you to write the alphabet in uppercase – that means the big letters. Than skip a line and write the alphabet in lowercase – the little letters. If you get stuck on a letter, look up here on the wall above the chalkboard to see what they are. If you still have time after that, skip another line, and start writing out your numbers. No more then ten numbers to a line, go as high as you can count. Do as much as you can in the next five minutes. Ready? Go!" She said.

All of the small students followed the teacher's instructions. Most had their heads down, trying to write the letters as best they could. The one exception was Dudley. He had to stop after every letter and look up at the chart to see what came next and how it was formed. With a look of great concentration, Dudley bore down on the pencil on the piece of paper. Needless to say, he broke the lead on all six pencils that his mother had sent with him to school, (Harry must have had something to do with that) and had to ask Miss. Moon if he could take some time to sharpen the pencils.

Harry was having a different problem. This was basically the first time he had held any writing instrument in his hand. As a result, his fingers were getting sore quickly.

Harry knew his alphabets since he was 17 months old, when 'Ma' taught him the Alphabet Song. It wasn't until much later that Harry could put the 'name' of the letter with its 'shape'. Never the less,

Harry picked up quickly that you did not have to press very hard on the paper to leave a mark.

Harry went through the uppercase letters followed quickly by the lower case letters. After shacking the feeling back into his hand, he started on the numbers.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20

Harry realized that if he were to start at the beginning, he should have started with 0. So, erasing the first two lines from the assignment, he started again.

0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,

10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,

20 ...

Harry was just getting to the bottom of the page when Miss. Moon called for them to put down their pencils down. Dudley complained that he hadn't finished the first line yet, and that time couldn't be up. Miss. Moon ignored him and picked up the papers. Right after that bell rang so the students could go out and have first recess.

Harry held back, and made sure he was the last one to leave. He wanted to be sure he could keep an eye on where Dudley was at, at all times.

As Harry left the building to go to the playground, he found Alice standing on the side, just watching the other students.

"Hello Alice, thank you for letting me uses your pencil. By the way, my name's Harry, Harry Potter."

"It's nice to meet you Harry. I'm Alice Graham. Is that bully really your cousin?"

Harry let out a little laugh, "I'm afraid so. It's been like that as long as I remember."

"Well I think it was horrible the way he treated you in there!"

"Don't worry about it; I'm use to it... for the most part." Harry said the last part a bit sadly.

"Why aren't you out there playing with the other kids?" Harry asked.

"I could ask you the same thing. In my case, we just moved into the area just before school started, so I haven't had a chance to meet any of the kids in the neighborhood. Now, what about you? Why aren't you out there?" Alice asked.

"To be honest, this is about the first time I've had to meet other children at all. My Aunt and Uncle don't like me out of the house, or out of their sight too much. I might spread my 'freakiness' around."

"What's with that? What do they mean by 'freakiness'?" Questioned Alice.

"I'm not too sure," Harry lied, "I think they are just mad at my parents for dieing and leaving me with them."

"It must have been hard growing up that way."

"No, not really. I just stay out of their way as much as possible and do what every they need done around the house."

"Like what?" Alice was curious.

"Oh, you know, cook the food, do the dishes, dust the house, Hoover the carpets, do the washing, drying, and fold the cloths – they put them away since they don't want me in their rooms – mow the lawn, trim the hedge, pull the weeds, plant the flowers, and paint the fence... Its kind of fun, it keeps me busy and I get to work outside. It makes the time go faster. "When I'm not busy, I get to go to my room and study, or have time to think."

Alice was amazed. She knew how hard some of that housework could be. And here she complained when her mum asked her to clean up her room.

The bell rang signifying the end of the recess period and for the children to return to class. Harry and Alice were two of the first in the

building since they were closest to the doors. As they entered into the classroom, however, Dudley came running up and tried to push through both of them. Harry's 'shield' stopped Dudley from running through him. As he 'bounced' off the shield, he fell into Alice, knocking her hard to the floor, with Dudley falling on top of her.

Miss. Moon got up from her desk to see what the commotion was at the door. "What is going on here?" She asked.

"It's Harry Miss. Moon. He pushed me into Alice here." Dudley responded pointing his beefy finger at Harry.

Harry was helping Alice out from underneath Dudley, and helped her stand back up.

"No he didn't Dudley, you tried to push your way through, but Harry didn't move. When he didn't move, you tripped me and fell on top of me you big elephant!" Alice yelled out. Her head had a big bump on it that was starting to swell and bleed.

"Student, come in and get out your reading books, stay quite and busy until I get back. Alice, I need to take you to the school nurse, and Dudley, you need to come with me to the Superintendents office." Miss. Moon seriously.

"ME! But it's that freaks fault! He's the one that pushed me into her!"

"How could he push you into her when he was in front of you Dudley?" Miss. Moon asked.

"I don't know how he did it! All I know is that it's that freaks fault not mine!"

"I am quite tired of hearing you call Harry a freak every time you talk to him. Is this how you treat him at home? Maybe I need to have someone from Family Services come by to talk to your parents about how they are treating Harry."

"Miss. Moon, you don't have to do that. I'm treated well enough." Harry said.

"Well, I think we're going to have to separate you two or no one will be able to learn." With that Miss. Moon took Alice and Dudley down the hall.

When Harry got home that afternoon, the Dursley's were ready to explode.

"FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL AND DUDLEY GETS SUSPENDED FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK! HOW DID YOU DO IT YOU LITTLE FREAK?" Uncle Vernon was in rare form today.

"I didn't do anything Uncle Vernon. Alice and I were returning in from recess when Dudley tried to push through us. Somehow he tripped and fell on top of Alice. She got a bump on the head, and a cut. Then Miss. Moon took them to the office. That's all I know."

"There has to be more to it than that now boy! You must have used your unnaturalness to cause the accident. My sweet little Dudlekums would never do anything like that. Especially to a little girl." This time it was Aunt Petunia putting in her two cents worth.

"I'll tell you what you're going to do now young man. You're going into the kitchen and fix our dinner, then you are going to GET IN THAT CUPBOARD AND STAY FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK!" Uncle Vernon threatened.

"I'm sorry, but I can't do that." Harry said.

"AND JUST WHY NOT? ARE YOU TELLING ME WHAT I CAN AND CAN NOT DO IN MY OWN HOME?"

"All I'm saying is that Miss. Moon already suggested sending someone over from Family Services to see how I'm being treated. If I don't show up to school, I'm sure there is nothing what will stop her from contacting them. Do you want me to show them where I sleep if Family Services does come by?"

"ARE YOU THREATENING ME BOY?"

"No. I'm just asking a question. If you raise too many flags, Family Services will be called and they will find out how you've been treating me. Now I am willing to stay in my cupboard, except to do the house and yard work and to do the cooking and cleaning, but I

will not miss school. I like being with other kids that are my age, and I really like my teacher Miss. Moon. Now if you'll excuse me, I have some work to do before dinner."

With that Harry excused himself and started cleaning things up outside until it was time to start dinner. He still didn't get much to eat, but that was alright, he could come out later at night to get something else to eat if he needed to.

When Dudley came back the next week, Harry found out that he had been transferred to Miss. Harrison's class in exchange for one of her students. Harry had hoped that having Miss. Harrison would have straightened Dudley out since she was known as such a strict disciplinarian. Instead, Dudley found a coach and mentor in the treatment and torture of children smaller than you. Dudley soon became Miss. Harrison's 'teachers pet'. She would let Dudley take care of some of the 'minor' infractions of her classroom rules.

As the next two years went by, Harry continued to excel in school, while Dudley excelled in cruelty.

The school administrators made sure the two cousins were in different classes, and it seemed that wherever they went, you could predict the outcome in the class results.

In Harry's classes you had greater class unity and learning. Harry was always kept quite and mostly stayed to himself, but he was always near the head of his class in all subjects.

While in Dudley's class you had the feeling of terror and oppression. Dudley always picking on the smaller children and at his size that was everyone.

Some thought it funny that the best and worst students came from the same home.

During the summer, Harry continued to work hard in the yard and around the house. He had continued to expand his magical core and his mental capabilities, but was much more careful when drawing power from the Blood runes.

Harry started a tradition of staying up on July 30th until midnight. At the stroke of 12:00, Harry would make another notch on the wall in

his cupboard and wish himself a happy birthday, and then go to sleep.

After his eight birthday Harry laid down on his little blanket, and fell to sleep quickly. As with most nights he found himself in his subconscious to spend the evening learning with his 'Ma'. This evening Harry felt a bit low since it seemed no one knew or cared that it was his birthday.

'Ma' took Harry in a gentle hug, and whispered, 'Happy Birthday Harry.'

Harry hung on to 'Ma' trying to feel what it would be like to be hugged by his real mother.

'Harry, now that you have reached the age of accountability, you must know that now you will be held accountable for the magic you perform; that when you leave this sphere of existence, and move on to the next great adventure, you will be judged by Magic it's self for your deeds, and how you have handled the talents, and gifts you have been given, and whether you have used them for 'good' or 'evil'.

'What do you mean?' Harry questioned. 'Who is to say what is good and what is evil?'

'Every person is given an internal beacon or light that points to the correct path. As you perform good deeds, the light gets stronger. If you perform bad deeds or act cruelly, the light gets dimmer until it is so dim it is difficult to see. For some people, like Voldemort, the light is completely extinguished.

Also, now that you have reached this age, there are several things about your history, past and future that you need to be made aware of so that you can make more informed decision.' 'Ma' started.

As for your past... Shortly before you were born, there was a prophecy made that stated in part: 'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...'

'In part? What does the rest of the prophecy say?' Harry asked.

'We don't know. That's all of the prophecy Professor Dumbledore would tell us.'

'Professor Dumbledore? I thought he was just the Headmaster at Hogwarts.'

'Yes he is, but, Professor Dumbledore is many other things. In addition to being Headmaster: He is the recipient of the Order of Merlin – First Class; the Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot; the Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards; and the first recognized Grand Sorcerer in over 500 years. For these reasons he carries a lot of political weight in the wizarding world.'

'Professor Dumbledore is also the leader of a group called 'The Order of the Phoenix' that is dedicated to the way of the 'Light'.

'But getting back to the prophecy.'

'Ma' then 'showed', and told Harry all about Frank and Alice Longbottom, and their son Neville who was born just a few hours before Harry, and how Lily was Neville's godmother. She told him about the check-up from the Medi-witch from St. Mungo's, and how all babies who had a power rating over 40 had their magic 'bound' so they will not be as powerful as they could be when they grew up and what his parent's did to prevent his magical core from being bound. She made Harry promise that he would be a friend to Neville, and remove the magical bind off his core as quickly as possible.

'Ma' also told Harry about the two trunks that Lily and James had made for him and how to use them.

Harry asked her, 'If I expand the trunks in this cupboard, there won't be any room in here for me!'

'Stretch out your magic and feel the room around you.' 'Ma' prompts.

Harry starts to 'feel' his surrounding in the cupboard. He finds that there is a familiar magical signature in the room. The signature 'feels' like his mother. The cupboard 'felt' like it used to be bigger.

'When a group of Death-eaters attacked here on the day of Petunia's and Lily's baby shower, Lily used a spell, *Extensus cella antepagamentum decoris idem* (Enlarge space, exterior looks the

same) and put Vernon in this same cupboard. It's probable one of the reasons you are in here now.'

'When you wake up, I want you to try and find the magic in you. Then think about how large you need this room to be, then recite the incantation and expand the room to that size. After you have done that, take both trunks; put them on the floor, find your magic again, and say *Expandere* on each of the trunks. The custom-made travel trunk is from your father. It is a trunk that his father, your grandfather, had commissioned when Voldemort first came to power. It was finished on the day that Voldemort killed your grandfather, and grandmother. There are nine chambers in it that will help you with your training. But we'll go over more of that tomorrow.'

'The second trunk contains mostly notes and thoughts that I ... Lily wrote down just prior to Voldemort's attack on Godric's Hollow.'

Godric's Hollow?' Harry asked. 'What's that?'

'Ma' laughed lightly. 'Not what – where. Godric's Hollow is where your home was located. It's the place where your parent's ... died.'

For the last few nights, 'Ma' had been telling Harry how 'accidental' magic, and 'wandless' magic were really the same thing the only difference between the two was just a matter of control, and doing the magic on purpose. Harry practiced and practiced trying to 'find', or 'feel' his magic and make it do what he wanted. A week after his eight birthday, Harry found his magic, brought it up into his hands, thought about the room being the size he needed, and said '*Extensus cella antepagmentum decoris idem* (Enlarge space, exterior looks the same)'. Harry noticed that there was a brief 'flash' of light that came from his hands and the sides of the cupboard walls. Instinctively he closed his eyes so as not to be blinded by the light. When he opened his eyes, he saw that his cupboard-under-the-stairs had expanded to a 12' by 12' room with a 10' ceiling.

Harry was so happy it had worked he almost shouted for joy, but stopped himself just in time, remembering that the Dursley's were probable still sleeping.

He then expanded both trunks. He carefully opened his mother's trunk first to examine the contents there. He cried as he read the letter she had written him, telling him about the situation they were in,

the prophecy Professor Dumbledore had told them, and about the love she and James had for him.

Lily's letter also included stories about Harry's early childhood, the tricks he used to play; about the Marauders, and about the traitor, Peter. She told him how, if they were gone, he should be raised by Sirius Black, or Alice Longbottom first, and that while he did have an Aunt and Uncle, he probably wouldn't be meeting them until he was eleven years old because of their feelings towards magic.

Harry was quite shocked to read the details in the letter. Why was he here then? Where was Sirius, or Remus? He knew from 'Ma' that Dumbledore had gone against his parents wishes, but seeing it in writing made it hurt a little more.

Closing his mother's trunk, Harry continued with his father's. He read the letter his father had left him explaining the history of the trunk, and what he and Lily had done to prepare for Harry's training. He explained the different chambers in the trunk, and how they were to be used. Harry then took his mother's trunk, opened his father's trunk to the fifth chamber (the living quarters), and went inside.

Harry could not believe what he saw as he entered into the foyer of the replica of the former Potter manor from Scotland. Storing his mother's trunk in the downstairs master bedroom, that he was going to claim as his room for now, Harry spent the rest of the day exploring his new possession. He was simply stunned by the items that were present in the trunk. The cloths, book, Library and study hall, the workout room, with everything he saw.

When Harry got to the eighth chamber, and read of everything you could do there, he just stopped in shock. His mind could not comprehend all the things he could do while in this room.

The first thing he did was to find the book that explained how the room worked, and what runes controlled the time in the room. After reviewing that, he went back to the manor and did the one other thing 'Ma' had asked him to do.

"Sassy!" Harry called out firmly.

Instantly Harry was greeted by a strange small person, with long ears and large eyes appeared suddenly in front of him.

When Sassy saw Harry she started to cry.

"Oh, Master Potter! How is you remembering Sassy? I is been waiting so long to sees you again! I is so sad about you mother and your father!" Sassy ran over and hugged Harry for all he was worth, crying and sobbing heavily.

Overcoming his shock and surprise, it took Harry some time before he finally spoke back. "Sassy, its ok. My mum left me a note to call you after I got my father's trunk. Now, Sassy, if it's not too much to ask, what exactly are you?"

Sassy composed herself and dried her eyes, "I is a house elf Master Harry. I and my family has been serving the Potter family for many generations."

"Just what is a house elf and what exactly do you do?" Harry wanted to learn more.

"A house elf serves the needs of the family. We's cook and clean, and make sure you has everything you need before yous ask for it. We's is to do this quickly and quietly without being seen by our masters and their guest. But most importantly... I is keeping all of your secrets." Sassy said.

"Boy, it sounds like I've been a house elf to the Dursley's most of my life them." Harry said to himself.

Sassy was confused at why her master would be a house elf to anyone else, so Harry gave her a brief background of his life with the Dursley's. When he was through, Sassy was ready to go out and curse the Dursley's into next week. Harry stopped her, telling her that it was all right, that he needed something to do to keep him strong and in shape.

Harry was not too happy with the way Sassy described her life. "Sassy, when do you take your time off, and how much do I pay you?"

Sassy looked like Harry had just threatened to give her cloths. "Oh, Master Harry, I is not taking any time off or taking any money. I is a good elf. And good elf's is happy to work for their families."

Harry still felt uncomfortable. He approached Sassy, and kneeling down, put his hand on her shoulder.

"Sassy, I don't view myself as being worth enough to be you 'master'. First of all, I don't know how to be a good master. Secondly, I'm just a kid who only know a small part of my families history right now. Third, what I could really use right now is a friend who I can talk to, and who will help me learn, and be ready for the mission it appears that I have to perform in life."

Sassy's eyes opened wide as she heard Harry say he wanted a friend and someone to help him.

"You is wanting Sassy as a friend? You is letting Sassy learn Wizard Magic? You is wanting Sassy to be with you your whole life?"

"Yes Sassy, that's exactly what I am saying." Harry responded.

Sassy jumped up and hugged Harry around the neck as tightly as she could. With tears in her eyes, she said "Thank you Master Harry, thank you! No other wizard has ever thought of a house elf as an equal!"

Harry thanked Sassy, and then took her on a tour of the manor, and the trunk.

Harry explained to Sassy that he was interested in learning as much as he could as quickly as possible. This would mean organizing his studies from the books and scrolls in the library, and using the time option in chamber 8 as much as possible. Harry explained to Sassy, that he would like her to get enough book, supplies, and food to last for as long as they would be in the chamber.

If the chamber allowed ten days of training in an eight hour period that passed on the outside, or one day on the inside, for every 48 minutes on the outside. That meant that Harry could stay in there for about five days (4 hours outside time) before he would have to come out and help with the Dudley's lunch. Then he could return for about another five days before he had to come back and fix their supper. During the evening, Harry could go to the trunk to do some reading and training in normal time.

Of course, Harry wouldn't spend all of his time working. There were lots of other things that he wanted to try and do, including taking his father's Cleansweep 5 into chamber nine, and learning how to fly! Of course Sassy insisted to be with Harry all the time and Harry gives her time on the broom as well.

When Harry was in chamber eight, it seemed a bit strange to him, but Sassy could go between normal, and 'extended' time without any problem. It must have been the house elf magic.

It soon becomes apparent to Harry and Sassy, that if Harry is to go very far in his studies, he is going to need some things from the wizarding world. But how will he get it?

'Ma' has told Harry about Diagon Alley, and how to get to it. The question is, how is Harry going to get to London?

Sassy comes to the rescue by letting Harry know that she can 'take him along' with her as she does what the house elves called 'sliding' from one location to another or she could teach him how to do that part of house elf magic. It is different from the wizards 'apparition' in that it is near instantaneous, absolutely quiet, and 100 percent safe. It was also very difficult to perform. As Sassy explained the process, as long as one place was connected to someplace else, even if only by air, the house elves could sense the object, person, or location, and open a 'hole' to it. Then it was as simple as walking through the hole to be at the new location. This is why when Harry called for her, she could sense where he was located at, and even though he was hidden from other witches and wizards, she could come right to him. The only effective 'block' for this type of travel was a total lack of everything – a complete vacuum.

Harry said that he would like to go along side Sassy the first time to see how it felt, and to see if he could understand the magic used.

Sassy explained that the hardest part of 'sliding' was conjuring a small amount of negative mass that was required to build the 'hole'.

Harry decided before they left, that perhaps it would be a good idea for him to have a hat or something so that people wouldn't recognize him while he was in Diagon alley.

No sooner said, then Sassy had a baseball cap with the saying 'Marauder's Rule' across the front of it.

Sassy told Harry that while they were in Diagon Alley, she would remain invisible. She explained that it was unacceptable for house elves to be seen in public. Harry didn't like it, but he understood.

Putting the hat on, and pulling it over his scar, Harry took hold of Sassy's hand and extended his magic (Aura reading) to where he could feel her pulling up the elf magic to create the negative mass. It was like nothing he had ever experienced before in his short life. Then as Sassy thought of the location she wanted to go to – 'The Leaky Cauldron' – Harry could see a negative mass shot out in front of him to open a little hole in the space directly in front of them. Then, following Sassy, Harry walked through the hole, and found himself in front of the tavern.

'I is being right beside you young master. Just go into the tavern, and head to the rear door that leads to the alley in the back.' Sassy whispered quietly.

Harry looked around, and seeing no one watching, opened the door to The Leaky Cauldron. The feeling of magic was almost overwhelming to him. Never had he been in the presence of so many magical people. He could sense good and bad intents of the different people, and the relative strength of each one. It was, to say the least overwhelming to him, and for a few seconds he froze in his tracks. 'Master Harry, yous must be not using your aura reading here. It is being too much for you right now.' Harry heard Sassy say. Struggling to turn thing off, Harry felt Sassy push him towards the back of the tavern while he came back to his senses.

Upon reaching the back wall, Harry said "Thanks Sassy, I've never felt anything like that before. It was just overwhelming to me. I couldn't take everything in."

"Yous is not a fully trained wizard yet. Yous must be careful in what yous does with your magic until yous know how to uses it. Now watch." Sassy took one of her fingers and touched the bricks on the back wall in a pattern: Left, Up, Over, Down. Sassy vanished once more as the wall started to reform it's self into an arch.

'Welcome young Master, to Diagon alley.'

End of Chapter 9Chapter 10 – Harry goes to Gringotts

Essences of Lily – Chapter 10 – Harry goes to Gringotts

Repost:

From Chapter 9:

'Welcome young Master, to Diagon alley.'

'We's is needing to first go to Gringotts Bank. It be run by goblins. They doesn't like house elves very much so I's will has to stay out side. Just go up to a teller in the bank and tell them that yous want to make a withdrawal. When theys be asking for your key, be honest, and tell them you is not having it. They should take you to a room where they will prick yours finger to get some blood. The goblins has ways of finding out who people is, and what they own. I's also think that since yous is the last of the Potter's the goblins is wanting to perform a rite called 'The Appointment of the Heir'. This will make yous the official head of the Potter clan, with access to everything that the Potters own. It will not mean that yous is an adult yet, except when dealing as the clan head.'

'Don't worry about how much time it takes. We's is having a lot of time yet today.'

Harry was a bit afraid to go into Gringotts by himself especially after reading the word engraved upon the doors:

Enter, stranger, but take heed

Of what awaits the sin of greed,

For those who take, but do not earn,

Must pay most dearly in their turn.

So if you seek beneath our floors

A treasure that was never yours,

Thief, you have been warned, beware

Of finding more than treasure there.

'I wonder what that means.' Harry thought.

Summing up his courage, he enters the Bank and is a bit surprised when the doorman / guard bowed slightly to him.

Continuing on, Harry was soon at the front of the line before a goblin.

"Well wizard, what do you want? I don't have all day. Time is money you know." The goblin spoke roughly.

"Oh, I'm sorry sir, I have come to make a withdrawal from my vault, but I don't have my key."

"No key? Are you sure you have any money in here boy? What's your name?"

"Har... Harry Potter sir."

The goblin put his quill down and looked up at Harry. "Harry James Potter by chance?" The goblin asked most intently.

"Yes sir."

"Forgive me please Mr. Potter. We have been waiting for you for several years now. It is good that you have arrived when you did. Your accounts were about to be forfeited to your magical guardian, Mr. Albus Dumbledore."

"What do you mean forfeited? Like they wouldn't be mine any more?"

"That is exactly correct. But we are getting a little ahead of ourselves. We still have to make sure that you are who you say you are. Griphook! Come take Mr. Potter to the Hall of Inheritance and call Goldridge at once!"

A smaller goblin hurried over to Harry and led him down a maze of corridors until they came to a set of doors that looked as if they were made out of solid Gold.

Griphook opened the doors and ushered Harry in and asked him to please take a seat while he went to get Goldridge.

Harry sat down and took off his hat. A few minutes later, a much older goblin entered the room with Griphook and several other importantly looking goblins. Out of habit, Harry stood from his chair when the others came in and bowed his head slightly in recognition of the goblins who entered. The goblins seemed to be quite pleased and surprised at his actions.

The first goblin approached Harry and offered his hand. Harry reacted by taking the hand and shaking it.

"I am Goldridge Mr. Potter, Senior Vice President here at Gringotts bank. But more importantly, I was a friend of your grandfather, and an acquaintance of your father's. I am glad to finally meet you."

"Thank you Mr. Goldridge and its just Harry if you please. I am honored you would meet with me."

"The name is just 'Goldridge'. We do not hold to many titles here in the Goblin Kingdom."

"My apologies, I meant no disrespect. This part of the magical world is quite new to me. In fact, if my parent's house elf, Sassy, had not informed me of this place, and brought me here today, I would still not have known."

"How did she bring you here Harry?"

"She said the form of travel was called 'sliding', and she allowed me to observe how it was done."

All of the goblins in the room, except for Goldridge, seemed to be rather shocked and concerned at this development.

Goldridge just raised an eyebrow and innocently asked, "Oh really, and how is it done?"

Harry was about to answer when he received a strong feeling from 'Ma', and in the pit of his stomach that he was being tested, and that he should not answer.

"I am sorry sir, but I can not divulge what I have learned from Sassy. She showed me in good faith, and I must respect that trust. I must keep her secrets, as she keeps mine."

Goldridge smiled widely, his pointed teeth showing clearly. "I am pleased to see that you too treat other magical creatures as seriously as your Grandfather Harry. It was one of the many traits that I respected about him, you have passed your first test."

Trying to hide his nervousness, Harry said, "If I had known there was going to be a test, I would have studied for it."

Goldridge laughed out loud at this comment and many of the other goblins looked rather amused.

"It is good to see that one so young, with so much expected of him can have a sense of humor" Goldridge said, "But we have much to do today."

"First, we must verify that you are indeed Harry James Potter, the son of James and Lily Potter."

Goldridge pointed to one of the goblins to come forward.

"May I please see your right hand young man?" He asked kindly.

"Do you freely give this blood?" He asked.

"Yes." Harry stated, expecting a small pin prick.

Almost before he had finished his answer, the old goblin grabbed Harry's hand in a vise like grip, and producing a cruel looking knife, savagely cut the palm of Harry's right hand, turned the hand, slammed it on a sheet of thick parchment.

Harry was in such shock at to what had happened, he didn't react until the goblin had released his hand and stepped back into the line.

Wisely, before Harry spoke, he picked his hand up off of the paper and looked at it. He could see that there was a great deal of blood on the parchment, but when he turned his hand over, the cut was healed, and the palm of the hand clean of any blood.

Confused, Harry looked from his hand up to Goldridge.

"Goblin Magic." He said. "To verify the identity and lineage of a person, the blood must be given freely. We have found over the centuries that the best way to do it is quickly before the person can see the ritual knife and change their mind thinking that it will hurt."

"I would agree!" said Harry, somewhat still in shock rubbing his hand.

A second goblin came up to the table where the blood covered parchment lay and started waving his hands over it, and speaking a long chant in gobbledygook. After the chant, he took another piece of parchment and placed it over the first. Harry leaned back a little bit just to make sure this goblin didn't grab him and cut somewhere else. But he just turned around and returned to the line.

A third goblin now came forward with a large book in his hand. He placed the large book on top of the two pieces of parchment and spoke another incantation in gobbledygook. The book and the parchments both glowed for a few moments. As the book was raised from the parchment, three bands of color appeared on it. One was deepest black with a red border. The second was deep red with a black border. The third was the most interesting of all. It was Blue and Bronze with a black border.

Goldridge came over and picked up the parchment and looked at it interestingly. "I can see why Professor Dumbledore would have liked you to forfeit the vaults. It would appear my young friend, that you are the Heir Apparent of both the ancient and noble houses of Potter and Ravenclaw, and the Heir Presumptive of the ancient and noble house of Black. That means if the current head of the house of Black does not have an heir before he dies, which is very likely, you will inherit the title of Lord Black in addition to your rightful titles of Lord-Baron Potter and Lord Ravenclaw. You can legally be addressed by any of these titles, but I would assume you would prefer to keep your family name, while keeping the other title private for now."

Harry was simply overwhelmed at the information that the goblins had given him. He found that he needed to sit down for a few minutes to let it all sink in.

Harry hadn't noticed that as soon as the heritage lines were announced, three goblins left the room to collect items needed for the next part of the Appointment of the Heir ritual.

While they were out of the room, Harry asked Goldridge, "What are you talking about when you say that Professor Dumbledore wanted me to 'Forfeit' my vaults to him?"

"Ah, you caught that point did you. It would seem that Professor Dumbledore has taken it upon himself to 'reunite' the artifacts of the founders. He already has the sword of Gryffindor, the chalice from Hufflepuff, and a potions manual from Slytherin. I believe he got that artifact about 40 years ago. But according to our sources, he is unable to read the text. So all he needs now is the coronet from Ravenclaw, and have everything he needs to claim ownership of Hogwarts."

"It is said that the coronet is located in the main Ravenclaw vault. But since it has remained unopened for almost 800 years, no one is sure."

"What is a 'coronet'?" Harry asked.

"A small or lesser crown usually signifying a rank below that of a sovereign' is the technical definition, but the main idea is that it signifies power and authority. It is the one thing Dumbledore lacks in his plan to take over Hogwarts."

"Why would he want to 'take over' Hogwarts? Isn't he already the Headmaster? Can't he basically do what ever he want to anyway?" Harry was still confused.

Goldridge laughed. "No, Dumbledore has to answer to the School Board, the Ministry of Magic, and to the parents of the children that go to Hogwarts. If he could declare himself 'sovereign' over Hogwarts, no one could touch him."

Harry sat and thought about what had learned. 'Ma' was also processing how this new information affected how she viewed her former Headmaster.

As the three goblins returned Goldridge spoke again. "We will conclude the Ritual of the Appointment of the Heir by installing you into your three titles. First we will start with the House of Black, since you are only the Heir Presumptive."

"Excuse me sir, but who is the current head of the ancient and noble house of Black? Would it be possible for me to meet him or her?" Harry asked.

These questions took Goldridge by surprise. "The current head of the House of Black is Sirius Black, the person that betrayed your family to the Dark Lord. He is currently serving a life sentence in Azkaban Prison and has been for the last six plus years. Why would you want to meet him? I would think you would want him dead for what he did to your family." Goldridge was a bit upset with the memory of Sirius Black by the time he was through talking about him.

Harry was shocked again. His uncle Padfoot had been sent to prison for something he didn't do. Harry had to fix the problem as quickly as possible.

"But Sirius wasn't the secret keep. Peter Pettigrew was! He's the little RAT that came into our home with Voldemort and killed my father and mother!"

Now it was the goblins turn to be shocked.

"Do you have any proof of this Harry?" Goldridge asked seriously.

"Do you have a pensive? If I had a wand I could extract the memory of either the night he became our secret keeper, or the night he came with Voldemort."

Goldridge spoke quickly to one of the other goblins who then quickly left the room. Another goblin went to the far end of the room and retrieved a small pensive.

"No, that won't do," Goldridge said, "We need an Aurors pensive that is capable of making an exact copy of the memory so that Harry's memories can be returned to him while we keep a copy."

The goblin put the first pensive back, and returned shortly with another pensive with copy runes on the basin of the it. At the same time, the first goblin returned with a wizard curse breaker that worked for Gringotts. When he came in the room, his jaw nearly dropped to the ground. "Your Harry Potter!" He declared.

Goldridge took control of the situation and said, "Yes he is. And that is why you are to be obliterated after you help Harry extract a few memories for us to review. Is that understood?"

It was at this time that the worker took his eyes off of Harry and looked at Goldridge. When he saw Goldridge in the room, he became very nervous. "Sir yes sir Senior Vice President Goldridge sir!"

"Harry, I want you to think of the first encounter when Peter becomes your secret keeper. When you are ready nod your head, and Mr. Martin here will use his wand to extract the memory, and place it into the pensive. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir." Harry replied.

"Good. After the first extraction, think about that Halloween night, and show us what you remember Okay?"

"Okay, sir."

With that Harry thought back to that night so long ago. 'Ma' was helping Harry find the exact memories, and getting them ready.

Harry nodded his head, and Mr. Martin pointed his wand to Harry's temple. As he drew his wand back, two memory strands came out, and fell into the pensive.

"Harry, we just wanted the memory from the first event, not both at once, that can be very dangerous." Goldridge chided.

"That is just the first event sir. If you will swear a magical oath, I will tell you what is going on."

Harry waited until everyone in the room had sworn a magical oath that they would not disclose what Harry was about to say.

"Not only do I have my memories of that night, but I also have ALL of the memories from my mother Lily Evans Potter. The second strand is her thoughts and views that led up to that night including why Sirius was not used as the secret keeper."

Again the goblins were shocked and amazed.

"All of her memories Harry?"

"Well, everything relating to her upbringing, schooling and work experiences, but nothing too personal in nature." Harry said as he blushed.

This time it took the goblins and Mr. Martin to get over the shock.

Harry was glad they hadn't asked any more questions; he just wanted to get on with the meeting.

When they indicated that they were ready to proceed, Harry and 'Ma' again brought the memories of the night when Peter came with Voldemort to attack. Once again, Harry shook his head, and once again Mr. Martin extracted the two strands of memory of from Harry's temple.

After all of the memories were in the pensive, Goldridge went over and after chanting over the copy runes, asked Mr. Martin to return the original memories back to Harry. This he did one memory at a time to insure that all four memories were returned properly.

After that was done, Mr. Martin stepped forward, and shook Harry's hand saying, "Thank you Mr. Potter. I don't know what you did or how you did it, but thank you for getting rid of the Dark Lord." With that, Mr. Martin was escorted out of the room and obliviated.

Goldridge turned to Harry and asked him, "Harry, do you mind if we take a few minutes to review these memories?"

"Not at all sir. I've wondered what had happened to my uncles Padfoot and Moony, if this helps answer those questions, that would be great."

"Padfoot? Moony?"

"Oh, I'm sorry sir, Padfoot is a nickname for Sirius Black, Moony is a nickname for Remus Lupin."

"I see. Well, as soon as our chief of security gets here we will review your memories."

Just at that time, the biggest, meanest looking goblin Harry had ever seen came into the room. He snapped off some kind of salute to Goldridge, and growled, "Stonehand reporting as ordered sir!"

"Thank you for coming Stonehand. We would like you to come into the pensive with us to review a few memories granted to us by Mr. Potter here to give us your opinion as a law-enforcement specialist."

Stonehand gave a quick look at Harry, then back to Goldridge, and nodded his head in the affirmative.

"If you will excuse us Harry for a few moments."

"Before you all go in, I need an oath from Stonehand that he will not divulge any of my secrets that he may see." Harry looked intently at the mean-looking goblin.

Stonehand returned the stare, then smiled and said, "Your courage serves you well young master." He then stated a magical oath to keep safe any of Harry's secrets that he should see.

After that, Goldridge, Stonehand, and several other goblins entered the pensive, leaving Harry with Griphook.

After several minutes they returned looking very upset. Goldridge gave instructions to Stonehand to take the pensive and make sure 'the appropriate people' also viewed the memories, after stating an oath to not disclose any of the secrets they may find. If asked regarding the Lily Potter memories, just tell them it was found in one of the Potter vaults in another pensive.

"I am sorry for the delay Harry, but this will make your claim as the Heir Presumptive much more sound, and with a little luck, it may get your Godfather released from that Hell-hole called Azkaban. But without Peter Pettigrew, it may be impossible to get your Ministry of Magic to admit their mistake."

Harry felt his hopes dashed when he heard the requirement for Peter Pettigrew – or at least his body – to prove the innocence of his Godfather.

"Now, let us continue with the rite of the Appointment of the Heir, and getting you installed as the Heir of the House of Ravenclaw, and

the House of Potter, and as the Heir Presumptive for the House of Black. In this case, since the Head of the House of Black is incapacitated, you become the effective temporary Head of that House as well."

With that the goblins proceeded with the rites and rituals. The main result of this was the receipt of knowledge specific to each house, and power relating to the office of Head of House of the three houses. All of this was overwhelming to Harry, by 'Ma' reassured him that he would have time to understanding what had happened today.

After the rites and rituals had been performed, Harry was permitted to enter the main family vaults for the Blacks, Ravenclaw, and Potters.

He knew already that he had a copy of every book in the Potter family vault, but he knew he would have to return with his trunk so that he could make a copy of the books in the Black and Ravenclaw vaults as well.

Harry wasn't too surprised to see that there was very little gold in the Ravenclaw vault, but the books, and scrolls there were unbelievable! Manuscripts from the time of the building of Hogwarts! Designs, plans, everything! Lists of the secret rooms and passageways; wards that were around the school, and how they were controlled! Harry still wasn't old enough to know or comprehend the importance of what was here, but he knew that it would be important to him in the future. Harry could feel 'Ma' jumping up and down as he perused the list of books and scrolls in the Ravenclaw vault. But as Harry looked around, no coronet was found.

'Well, it will take a long time to go through this and the other vaults. Maybe years! I shouldn't get too discouraged after just one day.' Thought Harry.

After returning from his trust account, Harry was brought in to meet with Goldridge again.

"Now that you have been installed as the Head of the House of Potter, we can show you the will your parents left.
The Last Will and Testament

Of

James Harold and Lily Evens Potter

We, James Harold Potter and Lily Evens Potter, being of sound mind and body declare this as our last will and testament, revoking all previous wills and documents.

Should we pass on to the next great adventure before our son Harry James Potter, reaches the age of Majority, We appoint his Godfather, Sirius Orion Black, to be his legal and magical guardian.

We also ask that Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore be assigned, as executor of this will, to see that it is executed according to our wishes.

Should Sirius become incapacitated, then his Godmother, Alice Longbottom and her husband Frank Longbottom are to be appointed and the legal and magical guardian.

If they are not available, then other acceptable individuals to act, as guardian would be: Remus Lupin, Minerva McGonagall, or Filius Flitwick. As a last resort, Albus Dumbledore is to appoint an appropriate guardian for Harry. Professor Dumbledore, acting as executor of this will is not an eligible candidate for guardian.

Harry's guardian is to be given a generous stipend, payable from the Potter family vault, to cover any additional cost of raising Harry. The rate of the stipend is to be established by Goldridge of Gringotts Bank, and will increase at a rate of no less than 3 percent per year, or 3 percent over the cost of inflation each year.

Under no circumstances is Harry to be placed in the care of Petunia and Vernon Dudley. Harry is not to meet with the Dursley's until he is at least 11 years old. If any future contact is to be had after that, it is to be by mutual consent between both parties.

After Harry reaches his age of accountability, and prior to reaching his age of majority, his guardian is to educate him in the ways of business, both magical and muggle, and is to ask his opinion in matters pertaining to the business that we have interest in. His opinion is to be listened to, and if found sound, should be followed.

The guardian will have voting rights in all Potter affairs until Harry becomes of age.

If said guardian is shown to disregard Harry's general welfare, or fails in their fiduciary responsibility or the terms of this will, they are to be released of their duties immediately, and the selection of a new guardian is to take place.

If it is found that the terms of this will are not adhered to, a board of inquiry will be held at Gringotts Bank, with Goldridge as head of the Board. The board is to be comprised of goblin, witches and wizards. All meetings are to be held at Gringotts Bank at the expense of the inquiry to be paid out of the Potter family vault.

At the end of the inquiry, a new executor will be selected by the consensus of the members of the board.

As to bequeaths:

We know you don't need it Sirius, but we bequeath one million galleons to you and the Southern French manor.

To Remus Lupin, we bequeath one million galleons and the manor in Wales. Maybe you can fix it up to include a dog run for Padfoot. This is not charity Moony. Think of it as payment for putting up with James for so long.

To Peter Pettigrew, we bequeath one million galleons and the manor on the Isle of Man.

Aside from these bequests and any outstanding fees, debts, and obligations which are to be paid from the Potter family vault, we name Harry James Potter as the sole heir of all rights, responsibilities, duties, lands, titles, vaults and money, and is hereby appointed head of the ancient and noble house of Potter.

Just one last thing Harry; Please know that your Mother and I love you with all of our hearts. May Merlin bless and protect you always.

Dated this 15th day of October, 1981

Signed,

James Harold Potter

Lily Evans Potter

Witnessed:

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

Goldridge.

'Ma' had told Harry about the contents of the will, but to actually hear it was, to say the least shocking for Harry. To say the least, he was shocked and very upset.

He was to have been with Sirius, or Remus NOW! He was NEVER to go to the Dursley's. The person that betrayed his parents was to receive one million galleons!

As calmly as he could Harry asked, "When was this will received by the executor?"

"November the first, 1981".

"To whom was the will delivered to?"

"Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore."

"To the best of your knowledge, is a monthly stipend being taken from the Potter Family vault?"

"Yes."

"What is the current amount of that stipend?"

"Approximately 2,000 galleon per month."

"To whom is the stipend being paid to?"

"Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore."

"What would be the Pound Sterling value of the stipend?"

"Approximately 10,000 pound sterling per month."

"Have any of the bequeaths been given?"

"To the best of our knowledge, no."

"Who is currently controlling all of the assets and properties of the Potter family?"

"Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore."

Harry was starting to get really angry for the first time in his life he could feel his magic start to stir and raise as if it were getting ready for action. His green eyes started to glow brightly. From out of nowhere, a wind started blowing around in the room and all of the loose parchment and items started to blow around.

Harry was looking right at Goldridge with an almost murderous look in his eyes.

"How was I able to be placed at the Dursley's home when the will specifically states that that is to NEVER happen?"

"I do not know."

"WHY HAVEN'T THESE ACTIONS BEEN CHALLENGED BEFORE NOW!" Harry screamed. His aura was coming out, and all of the goblins were having a hard time staying upright. The displays and pictures on the walls were being knocked down and buffeted by the outpour of raw magical energy.

Stonehand and a contingency of guards came running into the room, only to be knocked back. Stonehand did get to his feet and was able to throw a spear in Harry's direction. As the spear approached, the shield from 'The Blessing of the Heir' flared into existence and stopped it cold. The other goblins stated to fire curses at Harry as fast as possible, but could not hit him. Stonehand then attempted to attack Harry directly, but as he went to thrust his sword, again the shield flared into existence again, not only stopping the sword, but Stonehand as well. He found himself rolling backwards on the ground. Using his training he quickly righted himself getting back on his feet into a fighting stance. His eyes blood red with the thought of battle. Some of the other guards were still attempting to fire curses

at Harry, with the same results, the spell would be stopped by Harry's shield.

"STOP!" Goldridge roared over the commotion. "I still owe Harry an answer, and he has not moved to harm us."

"THEN ANSWER ME DAMN IT! WHY HAVEN'T THESE ACTIONS BEEN CHALLENGED BEFORE NOW!"

"BECAUSE ONLY THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE OF POTTER COULD CHALLENGE IT ACTIONS OF THE EXECUTOR!" Goldridge replied.

Almost immediately the storm in the office stopped. Harry's aura dissipated, and the magic in the room was collected back into Harry's magical core.

Almost embarrassed, Harry asked, "Why didn't you just tell me before?"

"Please forgive me Goldridge, honored goblins, Stonehand, I meant no disrespect, and I did not mean to get out of control." Harry hung his head ashamed of the outburst he had just put on. He was a bit surprised when he heard Goldridge, Stonehand, and the other goblins start to laugh. At first it made him feel worse. Now he would be the laughing stock of the goblin community.

"Harry, you are to be commended for how well you control yourself in dealing with the goblins today. You took no offensive action, and clearly showed that you are a wizard who is not to be taken lightly, though I must say I can't remember when I have seen such an impressive display of raw magical power. Have you Stonehand?"

Harry looked at Stonehand who was still catching his breath. "Nay malord, I can't remember that last time an eight year old wizard clearly kicked my butt." Harry could see the battle lust in Stonehand's eyes. He lived for the fight, and the harder the fight, the better he liked it and right now, Stonehand was enjoying himself a great deal. 'This may be a wizard I could come to respect... in time.' Thought Stonehand.

Harry decided to try to regain a bit of dignity. Clearing his throat, he said, "Goldridge, as the Head of the house of Potter I am requesting

you look into the irregularities of how the will of James Harold Potter and Lily Evens Potter has been executed."

"If necessary, you are authorized to call a board of inquiry to investigate the actions of one Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore and determine his fitness to continue as Executor of the will and his claim as guardian of Harry James Potter." Harry hoped he had done it correctly.

Goldridge bowed to Harry and simply said, "It will be done."

Goldridge had Griphook take Harry back to the front of the Bank, and bid him a good day.

Harry went outside to find Sassy and put his baseball hat back on. He just wanted to walk around a bit trying to get the adrenalin to go away, and have his heart a chance to slow down.

"Master Harry, what is happening in there? The whole building be shacking as if it would be falling down!" Sassy asked.

"After going through some things with me, the goblins let me read my parents will. It seems I was never to have gone to the Dursleys, and Professor Dumbledore has basically been stealing from me for the last seven years. I guess you could say I got a little upset."
Back at Gringotts

Goldridge and the other goblins that were in the room with Harry move on to a conference room closer to the President of Gringotts office.

After they have all entered and sat down, the doors at the head of the room open. Ragnok, the president of Gringotts, and of the Goblin Nation entered with his guards.

"I take it you have just met with young Mr. Potter Goldridge, what is your report."

Goldridge looked around the room and then back to the President.

"Ragnok sir, we have indeed just finished our meeting with Mr. Potter. He is just as fair and honest as his Grandfather. He has just

been installed at the head of both the House of Potter and the House of Ravenclaw. I believe it is safe to say the coronet of Ravenclaw is safe."

"In addition sir, he has also been installed as the Hair Presumptive of the House of Black, and has provided evidence of the innocence of Sirius Black."

"Stonehand, I believe you also viewed this evidence. What is your opinion of it? Is it true and honest?"

"Aye Ragnok, it is a true account. The fact that he was able to provide two accounts of the incident would normally be more than enough to free someone if not for a few problems: 1) The ministry sent Mr. Black to Azkaban without a trial, so there is no ruling to overturn, 2) The actual traitor has been 'posthumously' given the Order of Merlin third class, 3) The body of Peter Pettigrew was never discovered, only a finger 4) Mr. Black was sent to Azkaban on the direct orders of one Cornelius Fudge."

"So by providing this memory against Mr. Pettigrew, without a body, you could be viewed as wanting to undermine the authority of the Minister of Magic correct?"

"Correct sir." Answered Stonehand.

Just then the door to the conference room opened, and Griphook entered.

"Griphook, can you tell us how Mr. Potter was after our meeting?" Goldridge asked.

"Mr. Potter was quite embarrassed by his emotional outburst in the Hall of Inheritance, but he displayed no weakness, or weariness. Once outside, he met up with his house elf, Sassy. It was quite unusual to see the interaction between the two. The house elf actually seemed to be concerned for her Masters welfare, and Mr. Potter for his part did his best to try to remove those fears. If I didn't know better, I would say ... they were friends."

This statement brought many raised eyebrows in the room.

"Goldridge, what brought on the outburst in the Hall of Inheritance?" Ragnok asked.

"It was only after we had disclosed the contents of the Potter's will that Mr. Potter became upset. His main point of contention was why no one had challenged Professor Dumbledore's action yet." Goldridge said with a slight smile on his face.

"I take it you had not mentioned that action such as that can only be brought on by the Head of the House of Potter?" Ragnok also now has a small smile on his face, knowing that Goldridge had been testing Harry's power, temperament, and moral standards.

"Precisely sir. As soon as I mentioned the roll of the Head of the House, Mr. Potter calmed right down."

"I take it that is was during this time that he almost destroyed the Bank?"

"Yes sir. Sorry about that sir. We had no way of knowing just how powerful young Mr. Potter was."

"Speaking of that, why didn't we know of Mr. Potter's power?"

One of the other goblins leaned forward to speak. "According to the records at St. Mungo's Wizarding Hospital, Mr. Potter was born in a Muggle Hospital, and was visited about a week later by a mediwitch. She reported in her notes that the infant Potter had a power rating of 39 and did not require a power bind."

"It would seem that either the mediwitch's initial reading was a mistake, or inaccurately reported."

"What would you say his power rating was today?"

"We do not know sir. Every attempt to read his power core was unsuccessful."

"Then what would you estimate his current power rating to be today?"

"Sir if I may?" Stonehand asked to speak. "During the time of Mr. Potter's magical display, I and a group of the ten best guards I have

came back into the Hall of Inheritance thinking that there was an altercation going on in there. I accosted Mr. Potter twice. Once with a spear, the second time my sword directly, neither time was affective, and I found myself being knocked to the ground without Mr. Potter lifting a finger."

"At the same time, the remaining guards where sending the goblin equivalent of the reducto curses as quickly as they could at him, with no visible effect on him. I believe if I had had 20 or 30 guards with me I may have started to even draw his attention away from Goldridge, but I can honestly say that I have never seen such an impressive display of raw magical power. Not even after Goldridge told Dumbledore he couldn't enter the Ravenclaw family vault."

That last statement brought some smiles to the goblins face.

One of the other goblins spoke up, "If I didn't know better, I would say we were looking at an eight year old Sorcerer, or low Sorcerer at the least."

Ragnok shook his head, "I would have to agree. But the real question is, can we use him?"

To everyone's surprise it was Stonehand that answered. "Sir, I believe that our Mr. Potter has the foundation of a Paladin. A fighter for justice. He is very charismatic, he has a high moral standard, his powers are developing at a tremendous rate, and I believe he would be a champion to the cause of oppressed magical creatures regardless of their nature or background. I have been in many battles for the goblin Kingdom, but I get the distinct impression that if you try to control or manipulate him as Albus Dumbledore has, you will pay a very sore price."

"I feel that we should support and assist him as much as we can, for he will certainly fight for equality of all. We can begin that support by calling the Board of Inquiry that he has ask for."

"I agree. Goldridge, please see that a Board is called as quickly as possible."

"Yes, Ragnok." Goldridge replies. "It shall be done." All the goblins get up to start to leave the room..

"And Goldridge." Goldridge stops and turns around to face the President of Gringotts.

"I would like to be on that Board." Ragnok requests.

"Yes, Mr. President. I understand." Says Goldridge.

End of Chapter 10

Chapter 11 – The Rest of the Alley

Essences of Lily – Chapter 11 – The rest of the Alley

Repost:

Harry made his way out of Gringotts Bank feeling very foolish. He had almost lost control of his magic for the first time in his life. 'Ma' had been in his subconscious trying to get his attention when things started getting out of hand, but Harry had been too caught up in the emotions of the reading of his parents' will to hear her.

After leaving the Bank, Harry was glad Sassy was there to help him settle down. To begin with, Harry thought it might be good just to walk up and down Diagon Alley to burn off some of his pent-up energy.

He noticed Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions and their window display showing the latest styles for the teenage witch and wizard (That dark green robe does look good he thought). Next came what looked like a bookstore – Flourish & Blott's. Maybe looking at the books inside will distract him from what had just transpired.

Stopping in there he saw a display full of new DADA books with the latest advanced spells approved by the Ministry. As he looked through the book, 'Ma' told him that many of the spells in the book were the spells she ... Lily had worked on just before Harry was born.

Harry did find one special book on potions making called 'Moste Potente Potions' that seemed to start right at the beginning with explaining everything you would need to know about the interaction of ingredients, to the most complex potion, something called 'The Wolfsbane Potion'. 'Huh,' 'Ma' said, 'they still only have it half right after all the work Severus and I did in refining that potion.'

'You mean you know how to brew the Wolfsbane potion?' Harry asked 'Ma'.

'Yes, I ... Lily had a very good friend that was afflicted with Lycanthropy.' 'Ma' answered.

'What?'

'He was a werewolf Harry. But during the other days of the month, Remus was one of the nicest, kindest, and I might add intelligent people I ... Lily knew.'

Harry had noticed that it was getting harder and harder for 'Ma' to not refer to herself as Lily. Harry thought for a few minutes trying to find a way to fix the dilemma. He'd have to address that problem after he returned home.

Harry collected a few more books before taking them to the register to be checked out. When the clerk looked at the selection of books Harry has brought up, she looked at the eight year old very strangely.

"Aren't these books just a little bit over your head young man?" She asked.

"I'm sure they are ma'am, but my 'Ma' asked me to come in and pick these things up for her. Is there a problem?" Harry asked.

"As long as you can pay for them there is no problem."

"Now, most of these books come with an automatic update feature that you can pay for, and we can apply so that as newer additions come out, these books will also be updated. Do you think your mother would want that? It's an additional 20 percent of the book price."

"You bet! That would be great! What does the total come to?"

"Well, total cost of all the books is 75 Galleons. O that, the ones that can be upgraded is 60 Galleons, and so the cost of the upgrade would be an additional 12 Galleons, bringing your total to 87 Galleons, do you have enough son?" The clerk asked.

"Ya, I think so." And with that Harry counted out 87 Galleons for the clerk.

"Would you like me to shrink those for you so you can carry them easier? Your mother will know how to take off the shrinking charm."

"Yes please." Harry asked politely.

Leaving the bookstore, Harry was right, the bookstore had taken his mind off of the events that had occurred in Gringotts just a few moments ago.

Turning back up the street to head back to The Leaky Cauldron Harry didn't make it very far before he saw a stationary supply store called 'Scribbulus Everchanging Inks'. It had a fine display of parchment, quills and inks on display. Going in quickly, Harry got a small supply of different grades of parchment, quills and different color inks, and an ink blotter. 'Ma' has indicated that it took a little bit of practice to get use to writing with a quill and ink.

As Harry left that store, he could tell that Sassy was right beside him, keeping quite, and out of sight, but there never the less giving him silent support, and helping him adjust to the wizarding world.

When Harry got to the next store he just had to stop and look inside. 'Quality Quidditch Supplies' looked like every young boy or young mans dream come true. There were brooms and Quidditch supplies of all shapes and sizes.

There was the new Cleansweep 7, a clear improvement over the Cleansweep 5 that he had in his trunk, or the new Nimbus 1500; the current top-of-the-line of standard Quidditch brooms.

There were pads, and mitts, capes, and robes, bats, and books, and quidditch sets for all levels of play; from primary school leagues all the way to a set of professional level elements including two professional bats, two professional bludgers, one international regulation quaffle, and an international regulation snitch in a dark Mahogany case with brass trim and fittings.

There were displays of historic games being reenacted in some of the training books. But the thing that caught Harry's eye was the display of a full set of Chudley Cannons robes in the front window. 'Man, someone would really have to like orange to wear that thing' thought Harry.

Deciding to finish his quick tour around Diagon Alley, Harry left the 'Quality Quidditch Supplies' store and finished walking down the street towards 'The Leaky Cauldron'. The last store he passed before turning around and going down the other side of the Alley was 'Slug & Jiggers Apothecary'. Harry just had to take a smell of it

on the outside to know he didn't want to spend any time in there right now.

Turning around, and going back down the Alley, Harry saw a small Cauldron Shop that seemed to have every type of cauldron that someone would need. He hadn't started working on potions yet. He was still going over the History of Magic and the History of Hogwarts to give him a feeling for the world he was now a part of.

Harry really wanted to get on with some of the Charms, Transfiguration and DADA courses for the Year one students, but knew that he would have to check with 'Ma' to see how the classes at Hogwarts were laid out, and then have Sassy help him in his studies in chamber 8 under the time rune.

Continuing on his tour of the Alley, Harry walked into Eeylops Owl Emporium. He knew that the main mode of communication – as far as letters were concerned, were by using owls. Eeylops' seemed to have every type of owl in existence in their shop. Harry just walked around for a few minutes feeling the aura of the different animals.

As he reached the back of the store, he noticed a large Snow Owl resting with her head under her wing. As Harry got closer, the owl took her head out from under her wing, and looked directly at Harry. There was something different about this owl. She not only radiated a higher level of magic, but she also seemed to almost be able to talk to Harry through her eyes.

"Hello girl, how are you today?"

The owl just looked at Harry and blinked her big expressive eyes.

As if by mutual consent, Harry extended his arm out to invite the owl to join him, at the same time that the owl spread her wings to rise off her perch and travel to his arm.

"BE CAREFUL WITH HER! She's been known to bite and snip at anyone who comes near to her! The shop attendant yelled. But it was too late; the snow owl had already come over to Harry and lit on his arm gently. Harry and the snow owl looked at the attendant like he was out of his mind.

"How much for her?" Harry asked.

"For that trouble maker, ten Galleons, and I'll throw in the perch; you'll still have to buy a cage and the owl treats, but to get that battle-ax out of here, it will be worth it.

Harry looked at the owl. "Battle-ax? Like a little fight do you?" The owl just ruffled her feathers and looked at Harry straight in the eyes. Harry kept looking at her trying to think of a good name. "If we were in Old Germany, they would probable call you something like 'Hedwig'. That's a name from the History of Magic book I'm reading. Do you like that name?"

The owl for her part hooted enthusiastically and bobbed up and down.

Harry laughed. "Okay, Hedwig it is. Hedwig, I'm Harry. It's nice to meet you."

Hedwig for her part just hooted some more and reached over and lovingly nipped Harry on the finger and then up on the ear, as if she were saying: "This is mine."

Harry paid the ten galleons for Hedwig, and another 15 galleons for a cage and some deluxe owl treats. As soon as they were out side Harry ask Sassy if she could please take the writing supplies, perch, cage, and most of the owl treats back to chamber number five in his master bedroom. Sassy agreed, only if Harry did not ANYWHERE until she came back.

Harry waited for a few seconds as he noticed the owl supplies disappear, and felt again how Sassy used the Negative Matter to open the portal to slide to Number Four Privet Drive and back.

"That was quick." Harry said when he sensed Sassy slide back to his side.

"Yous is feeling Sassy slide back to you Master?" Sassy asked.

"Of course. You showed me how you generated the portal, I just wanted to see if I could feel you leave, and then wait until I felt the same kind of 'shift' to know that you were back, and remember, it's Harry, not Master."

"I is sorry Master... Harry. I is not use to having such a kind master. Yous is much like yours mother in that respect." Sassy said.

"Thank you Sassy. Oh, Sassy, meet Hedwig, Hedwig, Sassy."

For her part Hedwig looked right at where Sassy would be (even if she was still invisible) and gave a little bob and hoot. Hedwig jumped up on Harry's shoulder when he started moving again.

"Yous is having a very smart owl Harry. Most animals, even magical delivery owls can't sense house elves when we is invisible. Nice to meet you Hedwig."

Harry had been walking down the Alley looking at the different shops while Hedwig and Sassy were getting acquainted.

All at once Harry stopped in his tracks. Ice Cream! Harry had never been allowed to have ice cream since he had been at the Dursley's. It seemed that as soon as a box of Ice Cream came into the house, either Dudley or Uncle Vernon had it eaten.

"Oh guys I have got to stop here!" Harry said enthusiastically. He chose to sit in an out door table so Hedwig would stay on his shoulder.

"Can I help you young man? A very pleasant server asked.

"Yes, do you have anything like a sampler where you can try a little bit of everything?" Harry asked with big eyes.

"Well, we haven't had much call for anything like that lately, but I'll tell you what, I'll start you off with a scoop of our three most popular flavors, and then I'll bring out another flavor when your finished with that until your full. Then you can come back and try the next few flavors until you've gone through all 213 flavors. But you may want to skip the Blood ripple, or Cockroach crunch. It's three Knuts a scoop. How does that sound?" The server replied.

"Great! Here's a Galleon to cover the first few rounds!" Harry said.

The server just laughed without taking the money, and left only come back soon with the first three scoops of French Vanilla, Chocolate, and Every Berry Banana swirl.

Harry ate the ice cream with great enthusiasm. But the server had been wise to only start out with three scoops. After about the sixth scoop, Harry felt like he was going to burst. Of course he had given some to Hedwig, who was now flying around Harry's head trying to work off her sugar buzz, and he had tried to get Sassy to eat some too, but she informed him that it would not be proper for her to eat out of her Master's bowl. Harry knew he had a lot of re-education to do with Sassy, but he didn't want to cause a scene right there in Diagon Alley today.

As Harry was sitting back recovering from his minor 'pig-out', he observed the different people as they walked up and down the streets of Diagon Alley. He noticed all the different styles the people were wearing. Pointed hats, wide rims, narrow rims, long robes, short robes (this one was obviously out-grown), new robes, old robes, tall wizards, short wizards, but the one that really grabbed his eye was the older witch coming down the street with a young man that must have been her grandson. They had just come out of a place called 'The Magical Menagerie' where it looked like they had just picked up a toad for the young man. The thing that had caught Harry's eye was the vulture the elder woman wore on her hat.

Harry took a moment to look at the young man that was struggling to hold on to his toad, and keep up with his grandmother. He looked so sad. Like he didn't have anyone his own age to talk to or play with. He wondered where his parents were. He looked like Harry felt when he was really depressed. 'I hope everything okay with him, whoever he is.'

Just as the two of them disappeared into The Leaky Cauldron, Harry heard the Grandmother say: "Come on Neville don't fall behind, we have to be getting home now."

'Neville... as in Longbottom?' 'Ma' was asking. 'Harry, quick, see if you can catch them before they uses the floo in The Leaky Cauldron to get home! You have to tell him about the power block!'

Harry struggled to get out of the booth at Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Parlor; he left the Galleon on the table to pay of his lunch, and started running down the street to try to catch them.

"Neville! NEVILLE – WAIT UP!" But it was too late. By the time Harry got to the wall that led to The Leaky Cauldron, the archway was already closed.

'I tried 'Ma', really I did!' Harry thought.

'I know honey, I know you tried. I just sorry we missed him. Who knows how long it will be before you have another chance to see him? It may not be until you both get ready to go to Hogwarts.'

'Harry, you can't spend much more time here today. Petunia will be expecting you home soon so you can make her lunch. You still need to go to Ollivander's for your wand. Now Mr. Ollivander's a little strange. He always seems to know what you are thinking which probable means that he knows Legilimens. Now, I have put up some basic shields around your mind so that people won't see me, unless they look really hard, now you are going to have to put up your own Occlumency shields so that Mr. Ollivander won't find out what you have been doing, and that I have been helping you.'

'You will also have to shield your magical core to where he cannot tell how big your magical core really is. Don't worry though; the right wand will be able to find you.'

'What do you mean 'Ma'?' Harry asked.

'The wand chooses the wizard Harry.' Was 'Ma's reply.

Harry took a moment to 'will' an impenetrable shield around his mind and his power core. Then he retraced his steps down Diagon Alley; past the Cauldron shop, past Flourish & Blott's, and Gringotts, to the far end of the alley where an old store were peeling gold lettering over the doorway read: "Ollivanders: Makers of Fine Wands since 382 B.C."

As Harry opened the door, a small bell sounded in the back of the workshop but nothing seemed to happen.

"Hello?" Harry asked weakly. No response. Harry tried a bit louder; "Hello, is anyone here?"

Suddenly the hair on the back of Harry's neck stood straight up. Harry turned around so quickly that Hedwig was forced to take flight. She squawked at Harry to display her displeasure.

There standing behind Harry was an elderly, clean-shaven older man looking intently at him through silver eyes.

"Curious, most curious." He said as he looked at Harry.

"Excuse me sir? What's curious?"

"I know for a fact that you are a person of magic." The old man started walking around Harry. "I have special wards around my shop to help me know a bit about my customers so I may serve them better."

"For example, I knew before you came in I knew that I had a young man, or was it a young woman ('Oh no Harry! His wards can see through your shields! See if you can make them stronger!' 'Ma' was almost panicking), Who's age seemed to be somewhere be 8 or was it 22 years of age – but there is only one soul – Most curious.

Anyway, I knew there was also a recently acquired familiar, presumable an owl since she was resting on your right shoulder, and aside from the package of shrunken books in your left pocket, your house elf – Sassy is it? And the Potter's Family amulet of protection around your neck there was no other magical devices on you so I assume you are here for your first wand. Am I correct Mr. Potter or I should say Lord-Baron Potter or ... Lord Ravenclaw?" Even Mr. Ollivander was a bit in aw with the young man that had just walked into his shop. But he was still confused. These wards had been used for over a thousand years. They had never had such a difficult time discerning information about someone who had come into the store.

Needless to say Harry was somewhat shocked by the amount of information Mr. Ollivander was able to detect through his wards. He just stood there for a few moments trying to figure out this strange man. Harry knew that he already suspected something, and he needed to try to get some control over the situation.

Standing as straight as he could, Harry looked Mr. Ollivander in the eye and asked him: "Mr. Ollivander, I need a magical binding oath

from you that you will not disclose ANY of the secrets you learn today regarding who I am, or what I have done."

Now it was Mr. Ollivander's time to stand and look somewhat shocked at being asked by an eight year-old boy to swear a magically binding oath! He did see the boy's point of view. It had been many centuries since there had been an Heir of Ravenclaw.

And then there was the coronet.

To some it was just a symbol of sovereignty and power. But Mr. Ollivander knew that it was the coronet of power and knowledge! It is said that the wearer of the coronet would experience a ten fold increase in power if the coronet found you worthy, and they would have the combined knowledge of all of the founders, plus the added benefit of being able to learn and retain knowledge at an astonishing rate. Yes, he could see why Mr. Potter would want this kept secret. But could he give him a magically binding oath.

'Harry, I don't like this.' 'Ma' said. 'He's taking far too long to think about it. You may have to do something about this.'

'What? I don't know any real magic or spells! All I've been doing is reading and trying to get ready to study. What do you want me to do?'

'There is an Unspeakable level spell called 'Obliviate' that can be used to erase his memory of his encounter with you. You may have to obliviate him, extend your magic and summon your wand then leave here as quickly as you can.'

'Unspeakable level! 'Ma' you said that it took up to 6 years after Hogwarts to know how to do those types of spells! How do you expect me to do it now?'

'Well, start by bringing up your power from your core. I'm sure Mr. Ollivander has a remarkable mind shield that you will have to break down before you can erase his memory. Next, look into your 'Knowledge Sphere' to see how your dad and I ... Lily did it. There must be at least a hundred examples, and if you watch closely, you will be able to see how it is done.'

Harry started to get ready to obliviate Mr. Ollivander, he really didn't know if he would, or if he could. All he knew is that he had to try.

He accessed the 'Knowledge Sphere' and found everything that was required. He reviewed in his mind how to do it. The main problem that Harry saw was that his parents both had their wands when they had performed the spell and Harry didn't have one yet. This meant that he would have to channel the energy through his body to his hands before he could do the charm.

While Harry was talking to 'Ma' and getting ready to obliviate Mr. Ollivander, Mr. Ollivander had been observing Harry. He could tell that he was communicating with someone – but whom? The Owl? Was it really an animagus? No, the wards had clearly shown that it was a familiar – a true animal. The shop was warded against being listened in on what went on inside, so it couldn't be from the outside. That left the house elf, or the amulet that young Mr. Potter wore around his neck. He quickly discounted both of those sources, so that left a source within the young man himself. But how could that be? He knew he was not possessed; there was defiantly only one 'soul' that walked into the shop.

And then he saw it. It was like someone had turned a light on behind the young man's eyes. They started to shine brighter and brighter – but he could not feel any magic build up around the young man. Then, from the corner of his eyes he saw the power start to build up around the young man's hands. Now he felt the power! It was intoxicating! So much power in one so young! Mr. Ollivander thought about the tremor they had had this morning. The people in the Alley had said that it was centered inside Gringotts. Could this young man be responsible for that?

Mr. Ollivander was brought out of his musing when he remembered that Mr. Potter had asked him for a magically binding oath. Now he saw that if Mr. Potter did not get the oath, he would be forced to attempt to Obliviate him. Mr. Ollivander was quite sure that Mr. Potter did not have the knowledge as to how to do the spell, but he did have the power! And if Mr. Potter hit him with the power that was building up in his hands, he might not obliviate him as much as he would obliterate him!

"Mr. Potter! There is no need to obliterate... I mean obliviate me! I will give you the magically binding oath!

He was hoping that Mr. Potter would relax a little bit, but he did not.

"I want to hear the oath!" Was all Harry said.

Mr. Ollivander swallowed hard and gave the oath.

"I Oliver Seth Ollivander do swear on my magic and on my life that I will not disclose the secrets learned today from Mr. Potter, also known as Lord-Baron Potter or Lord Ravenclaw. So mote it be."

"So mote it be." Harry said as he accepted the oath.

It was only after that that Harry began to relax and draw the power back into his core.

"Remarkable. I've never seen anything like that. Now, if you would be so kind, could you please drop some of your shields so that I can help you."

'I'll just drop the shield around my core. He doesn't need to know everything about me yet.' Harry thought.

'No Harry, drop everything. The oath he took will only apply to the secrets he learns about today. If he were to find out about else later on, he wouldn't be prevented by the oath from telling anyone else what he found out'.

'If you think it is wise 'Ma', I'll drop my shields.'

'Thank you son.'

Harry very carefully began to lower his shields around his power core and his mind. At the same time 'Ma' also lowered the protective shields around Harry's subconscious.

As they did this, Mr. Ollivander was re-examining the results from the wards that were around his shop to re-evaluate his young charge.

"Mr. Potter! What have you been doing? And what is this... presence in your mind that I am sensing?"

"First sir, my name is Harry, and second, I will remind you of the magical oath you have just taken. My 'Ma' felt it would be best to disclose all of my secrets to you since your oath only covers the secrets you learn today."

"Ah, your 'Ma' is very perceptive. Am I to assume that this is the presence in your mind? My I ask, how long she has been present, and who is she?"

"Yes, 'Ma' is the presence in my mind and she has been there since the night Voldemort came to kill my family. As to who she is... 'Ma' should I tell him?"

'You may as well since he is sure to have already figured it out. Just don't tell him how I ... Lily was able to do it. While your at it, you may as well tell him about your expanded core and mental abilities.'

Harry looked back at Mr. Ollivander. "She is the essences of my mother; Lily Evens Potter. Her thoughts, knowledge, and experience."

Mr. Ollivander stood in front of Harry with his mouth open, and his eyes blinking. He couldn't believe what he was hearing. Lily Potter was well known as one to the top spell developer and charms mistress in the Unspeakable Division, not to mention a top potions mistress – even if she didn't take her mastery test.

"How did this happen?" Ollivander asked excitedly.

"I'm sorry, but that is something that I and my 'Ma' are not sure of, so I can't really say."

"That is really too bad, but to have the knowledge and experience of one of the most brilliant minds in the Unspeakable Division is truly fascinating!" You could tell that Mr. Ollivander was excited with the prospects of getting some of Lily's knowledge and experience.

Harry for his part just looked at Mr. Ollivander and said coldly: "You may find it fascinating, but I would give anything in the world to have my real mother and father again."

Harry could feel the hurt in his mind as 'Ma' also realized, that no matter what happened, she would never really be Harry 'mother'.

"Forgive me Mr. Potter, I did not mean to diminish your loss."

"Thank you sir."

"Now, tell me how you came to so strong so quickly." Mr. Ollivander spoke with a twinkle in eye. For some reason, that twinkle made Harry feel uneasy.

For the next few minutes, Harry quickly told Mr. Ollivander about the *exporrigo magus umbilicus* (Expand (the) magical center) and *exporrigo affectio meminisse* (Expand the mind) spells and what his parents had done to help his magic grow; How he knew that all newborn children who had a power rating over 40 had their magic bound, and anything else he could think of.

Looking at the clock, Harry could see that it was almost time for him to be home starting lunch.

"Excuse me sir, but I really have to be leaving soon. Would you mind if I extended my magic to see if my wand could find me?"

Mr. Ollivander was surprised at the statement. One of the main enjoyments he received was testing the different wand on the students. Of course he already knew which would be the correct wand, but he was collecting his own set of data on all of the different students using the other wands as a 'cover' behind his true intent.

"Why... Yes, Mr. Potter that would be very interesting to see a demonstration of that use of your power."

Slowly Harry let out his magic, feeling all of the different wands and magical items that were in the shop. Suddenly Harry found a wand that felt like it matched his magic perfectly. Instead of drawing his magic back in immediately, Harry continued sending his magic out until it encompassed the entire building. Then Harry made a mental command for those items that were compatible with his magic to come forth. Harry was not surprised when he saw the wand box come forward, but he was more then just a bit surprised to see a staff of *Lignum vitae* wood, five gems stones and eight different core elements along with the mysterious sword of power – a sword similar to the famed Excalibur, also came out from the work area and on to the counter in front of Harry.

"Mr. Potter! What did you do?" Mr. Ollivander asked somewhat nervously.

"I just extended my magic out to encompass the building and then asked for those magical items that were compatible with my magic to come to me. But I didn't expect this!"

"Mr. Ollivander, I am very sorry for this, but right now I only have time to pickup my wand and return home, but I would like to pay you for all of the other items that came out also. If I do not have enough money here, then I give you my word as Lord-Barron Potter that I will bring you the rest of the money as soon as I can."

"Yes, yes, I know you are good for the money. It's eight galleons for the wand, but I couldn't even begin to tell you how much the additional items would cost. When you return next time, please go to Gringotts and ask them for a moneybag that is attached to your account. Then we will discuss price."

"One more thing before you leave Mr. Potter, do be so kind as to take the wand from its case and give it a wave."

Harry did as he was told. He opened the wand box and saw the most beautiful wand he had ever seen. Holly with deep set grains running straight all the way down the wand, polished to a high, hard gloss finish. As Harry picked up the wand, his whole body started to tingle and feel warm inside. The hair on the back of his neck, and the top of his head for that matter, seemed to rise with unbounded energy pouring out of each strand. Harry took the wand, and with a grand gesture, brought the wand in a wide arch in front of his body.

The red and orange sparks erupted from the tip of the wand, and were so thick that Harry thought he had caught the store on fire. Panicking, Harry waved the wand back, thinking only of putting out the 'fire'. This time deep blue and white sparks came out of the wand, and when they met the red and orange sparks, both quickly disappeared. The next thing either one of them knew the store was completely free of sparks, and there was no damage to anything in the room.

"Most impressive Mr. Potter. It only makes me feel guiltier about selling the brother wand to this one."

"What do you mean sir?"

"I remember every wand I sale Mr. Potter, and it pains me to say that the brother wand to yours is responsible for giving you that scare!"

"You mean Voldemort has the brother wand to mine?"

"Please we do not mention his name, but yes, 'He-who-must-not-be-named' owns the brother to your wand."

"Please sir, can you tell me the core of my wand?"

"Of course. As you know, the wood is holly, and the core is that of a particularly fine phoenix. The only difference between the brother wand, is that it is made of wood from the Yew tree."

"Thank you sir. You have been a great help today but I really must be leaving. Come on Sassy, we need to get home quickly."

"Yes Master Harry, we is going quickly."

After putting his baseball cap back on, and covering his scar, Harry, Sassy and Hedwig all headed back into the Alley. Almost immediately Harry ran into a poorly dress wizard, with premature gray hair. Knocking him down, Harry stopped, to give the elder wizard a hand up.

"I'm sorry sir I wasn't watching where I was going." Harry stated. As their eyes met, the elderly wizard took in a sudden gasp. "Lily!" he whispered. Then looking up at the cap, read the caption 'Marauders Rule' across the brim. "James!" he said to himself.

Using his enhanced sense of smell, he caught the whiff of a familiar house elf. "Sassy?" He thought.

By this time, the young man had gone back down the street and was turning the corner. Finally Remus Lupin raised his head and yelled out – "HARRY!" as he started heading down the street. When he got to the corner, the young man and house elf were gone.

"Harry!" Remus said again sadly.

At Number Four Privet Drive

Sliding home as soon as no one was around, Harry quickly changed his cloths and headed out of his cupboard.

"There you are you little ungrateful little brat!" Uncle Vernon was in a fine mood today. "Where my Lunch? Get in there and get it made before I throw you out of the house! And when your finished, get back in your cupboard and I'm going to make sure you stay there. We're going to go visit my sister's until Sunday night, and we don't want to be worrying about you!"

"Yes Uncle Vernon, sorry I'm late; I was doing my homework for the coming week." Harry answered.

"I don't give a DAMN what you were doing! Just get in there and GET MY LUNCH!" Uncle Vernon yelled.

Harry quickly went in to start making lunch for the Dursley's. He could tell that Sassy was right next to him, acting quite upset that she had not been asked to make the lunch.

"Sassy, this is the way it has to be while we are out here. When we are in the wizarding world, or in the trunk, I'll let you make all the lunches you want." Harry whispered to her.

"Fine! But Sassy still be helping!" Sassy said defiantly. Suddenly, all of the lunch meats, breads and cheeses were in nice, neat little piles to where Harry only had to arrange them on the tray before taking them out to the Dursley's.

"That was mighty quick you little freak! You didn't uses any of your unnaturalness on this did you?" Uncle Vernon asked. Dudley was already grabbing at the bread and meat to make the first of many sandwiches for him.

"No Uncle Vernon I didn't user any of my freakishness to help prepare this. Now if you will excuse me, I'll go back to my cupboard. Have an enjoyable meal."

"I don't care what you say Petunia, there is defiantly wrong with that boy." Vernon muttered.

Meanwhile back at Ollivander's

Mr. Ollivander was still somewhat in shock. Harry Potter had just visited his small shop, and had done more in that half hour to change the course of the magical world than anyone since the time of Merlin; And Mr. Potter didn't even know it!

Mr. Ollivander began to look at some of the artifacts that had come forward when Mr. Potter's magic 'asked' the compatible magical items to come.

The first thing that caught his eye was the wooden staff. It was from the heart of the Lignum vitae tree – also called the 'tree of Life'. This was the same wood that Merlin's staff was purported to have been made from. It was one of the hardest, most dense woods in the world. It was so dense, that if dropped in water, it would actually sink! Its density also made it very useful in a fight as it could effectively block a blow from a sword, knife, or most spells. This staff was unique through out all the world.

Next were the precious and semi-precious gemstones that had come to be attached to the staff. Mr. Ollivander found it interesting that there seemed to be one stone for each of the houses in Hogwarts: Emerald for Slytherin, Tiger's Eye for Hufflepuff, Ruby for Gryffindor, a Blue Sapphire for Ravenclaw and a flawless diamond that would be the 'focusing stone'.

Mr. Ollivander was most surprised by the number of items that came out in the vials that would be used in the core of the staff. Again, the first four vials seemed to relate back to the Hogwarts houses: Dried Basilisk eye suspended in Basilisk venom, a Grand Empirical Griffin heart-string wrapped around its wing feather, a full set of Ravens claws, and in the last vial, fir from an alpha male badger.

It was the last four vials that really shook Mr. Ollivander up however. The fact of the matter is that there had not been a person on earth who could control all four natural elements since the time of Merlin. Yet here, in the last four vials, was every indication that Mr. Potter was also bound to be a controller of the elements.

First you had the blood, gathered from the Liver of a Sylph – indicating the element of air. Next was the black bile gathered from

the gall bladder of an earth gnome – this indicated the element earth. Then, the yellow bile from the gall bladder of a Salamander – indicating the element fire. And lastly, phlegm from a water nymph – indicating the element water.

All of these vials were extremely rare and valuable. But there was still one element missing. In order to bind and blend these items without them blowing each other up or canceling each other out, you needed the blood of the wizard that they were going to be bound to. Mr. Ollivander knew that young Mr. Potter was not large enough to supply the amount of blood he would require for the binding, so he would have to wait until Mr. Potter was older before he could work on the staff.

The last item that came out to Mr. Potter's 'call' was the Sword of Power. No one was sure of the origin of the sword, but rumor had it that this sword predated Arthur and Excalibur, and may have been from the time of King Charlemagne and his twelve Paladins. Could this be the sword of a new Paladin? If it were, then Mr. Potter's life would be spent righting injustice wherever it was found.

The last thing Mr. Ollivander had to reflect upon was when Mr. Potter tested his wand. There was no doubt that the wand was a match for him. The level of Magical energy went up a full factor as he gripped his wand for the first time. And then there was the display of the sparks! The first was an emission of sparks from Mr. Potter's wand showed a strong connection to the elements fire ('red' sparks) and earth ('orange' sparks). Mr. Potter must have panicked thinking the room was on fire seeing the eruption of red and orange that came from the tip of his wand. That is why it was equally as impressive when Mr. Potter brought the wand back and had it emit the blue and white sparks. Again related to elements – water ('blue' sparks), and air ('white' sparks). And to be so perfectly balanced that there were enough of the blue/white sparks to 'extinguish' the red/orange sparks. Amazing, simply amazing.

Mr. Ollivander was in deep thought regarding all the different items he had just seen and experienced when the door to his shop flew open, and a very excited Remus Lupin came running in.

"Mr. Ollivander! Please excuse me, but was that young man that was just in here... was that Harry Potter by any chance?" Remus was very excited and nervous. He hadn't seen Harry since before

his parents were killed. He was worried because he seemed to be in Diagon Alley with just a house elf. Where was the protection? Where were the guardians!

"Ah Mr. Lupin, Dogwood, 12 and a half inches with the hair of a werewolf in transition. How are you this fine day?"

"I'm fine thank you, now, that young man that was just in here. Was that Harry Potter? Do you know how I can get it touch with him? I have to know that he is alright!"

"Oh, I'm sorry Mr. Lupin, but I have taken a magical oath not to disclose who that fine young visitor was, I hope you understand. Now, if you don't mind, I have to start sorting some of these things in my work area." And with that, Mr. Ollivander gathered up the items on the counter and went back into his workshop.

Remus left the store feeling sad and depressed. Was that Harry? What was he doing here all by himself? The only other person who might know was Albus Dumbledore, and right now Remus didn't feel like talking to the man that he felt let his friends die seven years ago.

'Please be safe Harry, for Lily and James' sake, be safe.' Remus prayed.

End of Chapter 11

Next Chapter – A Board of Inquiry

Essences of Lily – Chapter 12 – A Board of Inquiry

Repost:

As Harry entered his cupboard, he immediately made sure it was locked and went into the fifth chamber in his father's trunk and called for Sassy. "Sassy, could you get me a little something light to eat? And then we'll need to have about 5 days worth of supplies in chamber eight. I plan on taking advantage of the Dursley's being away."

"Yes Master Harry, I's be getting yous some food, and then getting the room ready. Is yous wanting Sassy to come with yous in your room?"

"Of course Sassy. I think the studying will go much quicker and easier if I have someone to talk to. Besides, I thought you wanted to learn wizard magic, and maybe you can show me some of your house elf magic."

"Oh, Master Harry I's is so happy! Thank you for being such a kind master."

"I'm not your master Sassy. I'm your friend, Harry. Please remember that okay?"

Sassy just started crying again, and gave Harry a big hug before going to the kitchen to get him something to eat.

Harry went into his master bedroom and went to sit on his bed and began to meditate. He had to talk to 'Ma' for a few minutes, and didn't want any outside distractions. Harry envisioned the landscape of his mind where he knew he would find his mother's essences.

When he got there he found 'Ma' working hard organizing the 'knowledge sphere' and protecting it.

'Ma', we need to talk about a few things.' Harry started out.

'What do you want love? Is something the matter? I think it's great that you are taking Sassy in to chamber eight with you. It's about time we started your training.'

'Ya, that's one of the things I wanted to talk about, but right now I think there is something a little bit more important that we need to take care of.'

'Is something wrong Harry?' 'Ma' was starting to get worried. She may be in Harry's mind, but that didn't mean she knew everything that he thought about, or exactly how he felt.

'I noticed several times today you started referring to yourself as 'Lily' or my mother, and then correct yourself.' Harry started.

'I'm so sorry honey; I'm not trying to take her place. I know that I am just her thought, knowledge, and experience. I was not the one that gave you life.' 'Ma' sounded a bit sad as if she were missing out on something.

'But you know what my mother went through when she gave me birth. Don't you? You know exactly how she felt the first time she saw me and held me in her arms. You know exactly how much she loved me and my father don't you?' Harry watched as his 'Ma' hung her head and 'wept'.

'I know you love me like I am your son, because in all ways but one I am and I want you to know that I do love you as my mother. You have shown me kindness and unconditional love. You have made it possible for me to live here at the Dursley's without losing my mind, becoming so depressed that I would never recover. I think I just realized today how hard it is for you in here. You have an entire lifetime of experience and your stuck in the mind of an eight-year-old boy. It must be almost maddening at times.'

'Oh Harry, it's not as bad as you make it out to sound. After all, I do have all of Lily's memories and knowledge to go through if I get bored. And I am still making progress on some of the charms and potions that I ... she was working on before she passed away.'

'See... Right there... that's what I want to talk about. You shouldn't have to worry about talking about yourself as if you're not my mother. I know who you are, and I think it would make you feel much easier if you didn't have to worry about some stupid grammar point. You have been working on charms and potions that you were working on before Voldemort killed you. You will still be 'Ma' to me, but you should think of yourself as 'Lily'.'

'Ma' looked at Harry for a few moments trying to take in what he was saying. For an eight-year-old boy he was being very grown-up about this. 'It would make it easier for me to not have to worry about how I refer to my self'. She thought.

'Thank you Harry that will make things easier for me.'

'Now, what else did you want to talk about?'

'I was wondering if we will be going over the first year material by subject, or in a regular 'school' type mode?'

'I think it would be best for you and Sassy to study just like we did at Hogwarts.'

'In the first years studies, we will cover the basics of Astronomy, Herbology, History of Magic (which you've mostly read already), Charms, Transfiguration, Defense against the Dark Arts (or DADA), and Potions.'

'You won't have every class every day. Some, like Astronomy are only covered once a week during the nighttime at Hogwarts. Others, such as DADA and Potions will have a single hour class one day, and a double class the next. Just to stress some of the finer points.'

'Now with bringing Sassy into the training, things may be a little bit difficult at first. You will have to read the material, and then I will go over it with you and teach you, and then you will have to teach Sassy. I will be observing what you are teaching, and if you are not doing it correctly, I will let you know. This means that you will be going over the same information twice or even three times, once by yourself, once with me, and once with Sassy. This has several advantages in that you will be hearing and doing everything twice, and you will soon find out that if you have to teach someone else, you have to know the subject matter so well, that you can explain the problem to them at their level. I use to do this with Hagrid, the keeper of the Keys and grounds keeper at Hogwarts. He was good friend. I hope you get to meet him there.'

'So, we're almost ready here. Why don't you go and eat, and then we'll start training when you get down to chamber eight?'

Following 'Ma's advice, Harry hurried and eat while Sassy got things ready to go into chamber eight for the next 5 days chamber time, four hours in real world time. He explained to Sassy what would happen to see if she was all right with the teaching situation. Of course she was overjoyed with the idea of learning wizard magic, but she felt uncomfortable being taught by her master. Harry reminded her again that he was her friend, and that he would be gaining more out of the lessons by having her there.

Harry and Sassy were not able to cover as much information as they would have at the same time at Hogwarts, but slowly, they began to fall into a routine. Good progress was made in all classes. They made sure that there was time to play and have fun, not just study. But at the end of the 5-day chamber period, Harry and Sassy had a fundamental basis for their magical studies, and Sassy diction, and attitude toward Harry was also changing. She now DID view him as her friend, even though he was also her master.

At Gringotts

Goldridge was following up on Harry's request to call a Board of Inquiry over the execution of the Potter's will.

The first thing he had to do was call the Board. There would be three wizards, and three goblins on the board. Goldridge wanted to get people who could think for them selves and not be intimidated by the presences of Albus Dumbledore.

From the wizarding world, Goldridge invited: Madam Amelia Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, Alastor Moody, semi-retire senior Auror, and Tiberius Ogden an Elder Wizengamot member.

For the goblins there would be, Goldridge – acting head of the Board of Inquiry, Ragnok, President of Gringotts Bank and leader of the Goblin Nation, and Stonehand, head of security – Gringotts.

The hearing would be held on the afternoon of August 28th at 2:00 PM. This would allow the other summoned parties to appear before the Board as well.

Headmaster Chamber Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Professor Dumbledore was somewhat confused and a little upset regarding a summons he had just received from Gringotts. It read:

Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

Order of Merlin - First Class,

Grand Sorcerer,

Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot,

Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards,

Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Greetings,

You are hereby summoned to appear before a Board of Inquiry regarding the disposition of the Last Will and Testament of James and Lily Potter.

The purpose of this Inquiry is to see if you are fit to continue to act as executor of said will.

Failure to appear before the Board will result in a summary judgment against you, and you will be stripped of all rights, powers, and privileges provided to you as executor.

The hearing will begin at 2:00 PM on August 28th, 1988.

You may bring legal council to advise you in this matter; however, this hearing is just to judge your ability in this specific case.

All participants will be under a magically binding oath that the proceedings of this hearing will remain private.

This will be your only notice.

Respectfully,

Goldridge

Senior Vice President, Gringotts.

'What is the meaning of this?' Albus thought. He knew that only the Head of a family could challenge the actions of the executor of a will! That was one of the reasons he had been so careful to put Harry in a family that had a clear hatred of magic. They wouldn't let another witch or wizard within 100 meters of him.

Albus went over to a little table full of magical devices all chugging, and whirling, and puffing out small bits of smoke. He cast his detection spells over the different contraptions. 'Harry is still at Number Four Privet Drive. He is still the only wizard in a five-kilometer radius. The wards are all still up and functioning properly. There have been no owls go through the outer shields. It appears everything is as it should be.'

'So why are the goblins summoning me to Gringotts? I know Goldridge was the other witness to the will, but even as a senior vice president at Gringotts, he does not have the power or authority to bring this up... It must be because I have asked for the forfeiture of all of young Mr. Potter's vaults, property's and titles. Don't they realize that this is for the great good of the entire wizarding world? I have spy's to pay, information to procure, people that need to be hid, and a corrupt ministry to correct? What is the purpose of the goblins wanting to get in my way? In less they are getting ready for another rebellion? Well, let's just play their little game, and see if we can get to the bottom of it. Without the Head of the Potter House, they don't stand a chance.' He thought.

Little did the Headmaster know but Minerva McGonagall, Filius Flitwick, and Remus Lupin also received summons from Gringotts, with a warning not to disclose or discuss this item with anyone else. They each also received a certified copy of James' and Lily's Will.
Number Four Privet Drive

Harry and Sassy went into their first extended schooling section over the August 13th and 14th weekend.

From then until school started again on the 1st of September, Harry and Sassy would average 10 days of magical schooling (chamber time) per day. This was split up in three sections: 8:00 AM through 12:00 Noon (five days chamber time), and 2:00 PM through 6:00 PM (five days chamber time). Harry would do all of his sleeping in the chamber, meaning that he would be well rested for the coming day. Some times over the weekends, Harry could get in more training

since the Dursley's would travel, leaving Harry locked in his cupboard.

By the time the Board of Inquiry was set to begin, Harry had completed most of his first year of Hogwarts course work and was starting to review the second year books.

With his expanded mind, and magical core, he was starting to learn at a greatly increased rate.

Sassy for her part was also making excellent progress. It would seem that wizard's magic was much easier to perform than house elf magic. She was kept busy taking lessons from Harry, fixing meals, taking care of Hedwig, cleaning up, and sliding back and forth between chamber eight and the library getting Harry more books to read. Sassy also took the time to show and teach Harry more house elf magic. Harry could now 'slide' by himself, which was a big accomplishment. In addition, he could now become invisible and silent by using house elf magic. This would be a great advantage to him since most wizards didn't pay attention to, or could even detect house elf magic, or if they did detect it, they would just think that he was another house elf.

Harry still performed the *exporrigo magus umbilicus* and the *'exporrigo affectio meminisse'* charms on the 12th of August. And this time, when he went to draw power from the blood runes that surrounded Number Four, he only took off the excess power so as to leave the wards intact.

Between the dates of August 12th and August 28th, Harry had made some other discoveries also.

It would appear that one of the wards around Privet Drive was an anti-owl ward. Meaning that any owl outside of the ward could not get inside, and any owl inside the ward, could not get outside. This was driving Hedwig crazy. Harry had asked her to deliver a message to Goldridge regarding the Board hearing, but she couldn't leave the warded area.

Harry asked 'Ma' regarding the situation, and what if anything could be done about it.

'Usually the person casting the ward comes and modifies the ward to allow a certain owl, or owl's carrying a letter from a certain wizard (like Dumbledore), or the letter contains information from a certain place like Hogwarts. But in our case, I think you are going to have to find the ward, and either 'punch' a hole in it to allow any owl through, or you can find the ward and try to overcome the magic and modify it yourself. You'll have to read about wards and how they are constructed before you try it.'

'Now, we know the anti-owl ward is not in the wards that are right around Number Four Privet Drive, so that means there must be an outer set of wards also. Why don't you 'slide' out to the park, and then ask Hedwig to take you to the other set of wards. Once we know exactly what Dumbledore has used, we should be able to find a way around it.'

Following 'Ma's advice, Harry and Hedwig 'slid' out to the park near Number Four Privet Drive. Harry asked Hedwig to show him where the outer edge of the ward was. When they got there, Harry asked 'Ma' to help identify what the wards were.

There was a Wizarding Notice-Me-Not ward that would keep any witch or wizard from even having the desire to come within a five-kilometer radius of Number Four Privet Drive; There was a very strong anti-owl ward set up to keep owls in or out of the shielded area as the case may be; and there was a Notification Ward that normally sent out a message if either of the wards were breached.

After they had found the anti-owl ward, 'Ma' asked Harry to extend his magic out so that he could 'see' and 'feel' the ward. Harry noticed that the ward was made up of little 'net' like structures that radiated a very nasty curse – if you were an owl. He also found that there was a 'register' of sorts where the magical signature of a given owl could be stored, to allow its passage through the field. Harry thought for a few moments, and then called Hedwig over to him. As she landed on his arm, he felt her magical signature.

Taking one hand, and placing it on the ward, Harry 'pushed' Hedwig's magical signature into the ward's registry so that she could come freely in or out of the ward, but keep all other owls out.

"Go on girl, try it now." Harry told Hedwig. Hedwig looked at Harry as if to say, 'Okay, but if I get shocked, I'm taking it out on you.'

Hedwig took off from Harry's arm and flew a few circles to gain altitude. Then, suddenly, she turned and looked like she 'dive-bombed' the warded area. To her great joy, the shield did let her through, but Harry noticed the 'Notification' ward was tripped, and a message was being prepared to go to Hogwarts that a magical owl had just left the area. It seemed that Dumbledore wanted to be notified of any owl coming or going from this area. Harry had to work fast and hard to overcome the notification ward, capture the message, and reset the ward so that it would look like nothing happened. He then added Hedwig's magical signature to the notification ward so that it would not activate again when she returned.

Harry returned to Number Four Privet Drive to continue his studies. Shortly there after, Hedwig returned looking very pleased with her self. She had a message from Goldridge giving the time and place of the Board of Inquiry hearing, and an open invitation to attend. 'Just come a half hour early and give his note to any of the goblins'. Goldridge also included a moneybag connected to his trust account vault, with a perpetual updating scroll that would show the current balance of the account at any given time. The current total in the trust account vault was just under 3.2 million galleons. Goldridge had also sent a note stating that as the Heir Presumptive of the House of Black, he also had full access to those funds if he needed them

Remembering his obligation to Mr. Ollivander, Harry 'slid' to Diagon Alley to pay the balance of what he owed. Entering Mr. Ollivander's shop, Harry this time felt the powerful wards that identified the persons coming into this establishment.

Mr. Ollivander came quickly out to the front of his store and greeted Harry. "Lord Baron Potter, what an honor to have you in my shop again. How may I be of service to you?"

"I have come to make my account current with you, regarding those items that were summoned last time." Harry replied.

"Ah yes! Quite an impressive collection of magical item, they tell much about the person who shall bear them!"

Mr. Ollivander then went through each item that had answered Harry's magical call and explained the significance of the item. Harry was most impressed with the description of the staff and the sword.

"Excuse me sir, but what is a 'Paladin'?" Harry asked.

"As I understand it, they are the 'champions' of the weak and oppressed. They do what is right, not what is easy just because it is right. Anciently, they would have been a trusted military leader, or possessor of some royal privilege such as a prince. They are distinguished by their high moral standard, and their power and strength. I must say, there will be great things expected of you Lord Potter, great things.

"Please sir, it's just Harry when we are in private, could you just call me Harry?"

"Now, could you explain the history of the sword to me sir?"

"The sword is called 'Durendal' reportable. It is said to be the indestructible sword given from King Charlemagne to his nephew and chief hero among the paladin's, Roland. Others say that this sword once belonged to Hector of Troy. It has been blessed by several Christian artifacts: The tooth of St. Peter, the blood of St. Basil, hair of St. Denis, and a piece of raiment from the Virgin Mary are stored in the hilt of the sword. It's 'core' elements if you will. It is to be used in fighting evil, and can only be wielded by the pure in heart. Again, most impressive Lord Potter." There was a little bit of awe in Mr. Ollivander's voice as he described the weapon.

Harry gave up trying to have Mr. Ollivander call him 'Harry'.

"Mr. Ollivander, when do you think you would be able to begin working on the staff?"

"Oh, not for some time now, you see, it lacks one thing yet, that is the blood of the person who will wield the staff."

"How... how much blood do you need?" Harry asked with caution, still thinking of what happened in Gringotts and the goblin with the sharp knife.

"About a liter of blood, freely given, all at one time. That is the element that will help merge all the other core elements together. Without the blood, putting some of these elements together would be ... very careless."

Harry understood, as he had been reading in his favorite potions book, *Moste Potente Potions*.

"So, what do I owe you?" Harry asked.

"The total comes to 247,500 galleons." Mr. Ollivander said without blinking. In response, Harry opened his new money bag and call out a sum: "250,000 galleons." Just as calmly.

"The additional amount is for storage fees for the material until we can complete the staff. How long do you think it will be before I can donate that much blood?"

"Well, I don't know for sure. Part of it is dependent on when you go through your first magical maturation. That should be between the ages of 11 and 14 depending on your situation. The other issue is, I think we should try to take the blood as soon after a new moon as possible, so that your body and your blood are full of magical energy."

"All right, will then I guess I'll be seeing you in about three to six years then, but, could I please have my sword, I may find time to practice with it between now and then."

Mr. Ollivander handed the sword, still in its scabbard, to Harry. Harry accepted the sword, and very reverently withdrew the sword from its covering. As with the wand, the magic in the room rushed in. The sword seemed to glow and shine as though it were freshly forged and polished. The scabbard too took on new luster and shine. Both Harry and Mr. Ollivander were in awe of the magnificent sword and scabbard. Harry would have to look in the Potter family library to learn how to become a swordsman.

Mr. Ollivander told Harry that it should be possible to conceal the sword and scabbard in such a way as to be undetectable, and he should be able to call the sword to him at any time, in any place. Again, more research. 'Ma' was loving it.

Harry thanked Mr. Ollivander and then 'slid' back to Number Four Privet Drive.

"Remarkable, simply remarkable." Was all Mr. Ollivander said.

August 28th, 1988 – Gringotts Bank

Arriving at Gringotts Bank at 1:30 PM Harry was quickly taken to a side room by Griphook, where he could watch the Board of Inquiry's proceedings and be close enough should he be required to make an appearance. Harry asked Griphook if it was all right for him to be in the main room.

"We do not want Professor Dumbledore to be aware of your status as the Head of the House of Potter until after the participants have been sworn in, and put under a magical code of silence. That way, the people in the room can not reveal anything that is said or done in the room."

"I understand, but what if I could do this?" "No Harry don't!" Said 'Ma'. But it was too late, with that statement, Harry used the technique he had learned from Sassy to go invisible and slid in to the Conference room.

Griphook started to panic when he could no longer sense Harry's presence or magical signature. "Lord Baron Potter! Are you still here?"

Harry had moved to the viewing wall and made himself visible again, and said: "Don't worry Griphook, I'm still right here, nothing to worry about, but it's great fun when your playing hide-and-go-seek, or capture the flag, when you can do something like that don't you think?" Then Harry went invisible again, and 'slid' back into the observation room and came visible again.

Griphook gave him a nervous smile and shook his head. "If you'll excuse me Lord Potter, I will let Goldridge, Ragnok, and Stonehand know that you are here. Please make yourself at home." With that he exited to room as quickly as possible.

Running through the hallways and corridors, Griphook knocked sharply on the conference room door outside the President of

Gringotts' office. Opening the door, he came face to face to the three most powerful men in the goblin world.

"Gentlemen, we may have a small problem."

"I was just with Lord Baron Potter, when he asked if he could be in the Inquiry room when the others come in. I told him that it might be difficult since all in the room will be taking a magically binding oath regarding the procedures. He then demonstrated how he could go invisible, and move to the conference room and back without being detected!"

"Stonehand, I thought you warded the conference room against apparition, portkeys and becoming invisible?" Said Goldridge. "You know how Dumbledore would love to pull off something dramatic."

"Yes sirs, in addition to a few anti-wizard magic spells just encase he tries an Imperius or some other spell. He could still defend himself, but nothing too 'fatal'" Stonehand responded.

"Then explain to me how Lord Potter seems to be unaffected by these wards?"

"I do not know sir, but I assure you, if he appears to be a threat to the goblin kingdom, and our way of life, he will be dealt 'with extreme prejudice' sir." Stonehand's eyes were glowing with the thought of battle.

"I do not think you will have to be so harsh with young Lord Potter. Remember what happened the last time you tried a direct attack against him Stonehand." This time it was Ragnok speaking. "Remember it was you who said that young Lord Potter showed signs of being a young paladin did you not? Let us give him time to grow and mature to see what his personality will grow-up to be."

"Yes, sir."

"Come now, let us greet young Lord Potter, and get ready to meet our other Board members and guests."
Observation Room next to the Conference Center

'Ma' was quite upset that Harry had given such a display of his magic without consulting her first.

'WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? Didn't you feel those wards around the room before you did that? Those are to prevent wizards from going invisible and apparating or using most types of 'offensive' magic! Now they will view you as a risk to them unless you can convince them otherwise. And there is one thing you have to be sure of when dealing with goblins; NEVER LIE!'

'Goblins are very proud and honorable people. They appreciate complete honesty in others as well. The reason they seem so strict, is that they are living up to the LETTER of the law. They have been lied to so many times by wizards that they expect us not to live up to our end of the deal! Why do you think they put so many wards around this room! And then you go and punch holes through them like they're paper? Do you know what that mean to them? They don't have anyway of stopping you from going anywhere in their world and do anything you want! Now Harry, if you were the leader of the goblin nation, and you had someone that could go anywhere and do anything in your kingdom, what do you think you would do?'

Harry was a bit shaken up at his 'Ma's reaction to his little demonstration. All he wanted to do was show the goblins that he could be in the conference room and not be seen by the other people. He didn't want to cause another goblin rebellion. From the ones he had read about, they were always ugly, and the only thing that happened was a lot of people died on both sides.

'I'm sorry 'Ma', I wasn't thinking.'

'Well that goes without saying... I'm sorry Harry that was uncalled for, but we have a problem that needs to be fixed now don't we?'

'Yes, we do. What do you think I can do to make it up to the goblins 'Ma'.'

Both Harry and 'Ma' thought for a few minutes about different ways to get out of their current problem.

'Ma', do you think if I promise never to do it again that will be good enough?' Harry asked sincerely.

'Ma' laughed a little thinking at how simple life would be if our word were our bond. But then she thought, 'the goblins seem to be paying

a great deal of attention to Harry for some reason. Do they know something about his destiny?'

'Harry, do you understand what a Paladin is and what is expected of him?' 'Ma' asked.

'Yes 'Ma', a Paladin is someone who fights against injustice no matter what the odds are. It's someone who does the right thing because it is right, not what is easy. A Paladin fights for those who can't fight for themselves, or who are unjustly oppressed.'

'Now Harry, I want you to think very carefully... Do you want to be a Paladin?'

Harry had known this question was coming ever since Mr. Ollivander told him about the sword that had come to him in his shop. He had been thinking a great deal about it as he went through his schoolwork with 'Ma' and Sassy.

For some reason, Harry has a picture in his mind of him dressed as Don Quixote, with Sassy as his faithful Sancho Panza going around 'tilting at windmills'. Harry cleared that from his mind and thought seriously about the situation at hand. After a few moments, Harry made up his mind.

'Yes 'Ma', I've made up my mind. You know what I have to be: what I have to do. I am going to be a Paladin. Not because it will be easy, or appealing, but because it is the right thing to do, and because there is injustice in the world that I can fix – starting with Voldemort.'

'Ma' looked at Harry and smiled, 'I'm very proud of you son. Now you know the first thing you have to do don't you?'

'Yes 'Ma', I have to pledge to the goblins on my life and on my magic that I will never do anything to the goblin kingdom as long as they are in the right.'

'That's a pretty big promise; do you think you can keep it?'

'As long as I am choosing the right, and they are in the right, I can keep this promise.'

'Okay dear, you know I love you and will support you as much as I can.' Mentally, 'Ma' gave Harry a hug letting him know how proud she was of him.

At that time the door to the observation room opened, and Ragnok, Goldridge, Stonehand, and Griphook all walked in.

"Good afternoon Lord Baron Potter. Thank you for joining us this day." Ragnok stepped forward to shake Harry's hand.

Harry instead went to one knee before Ragnok and looking him straight in the eyes, spoke: "Lord Ragnok, I fear I have acted most foolishly this morning. I meant no disrespect to you or the Goblin Nation when I incorrectly used the gifts I have been granted for simple amusement and entertainment for myself before Griphook. I did not understand the tension that existed between the goblins and the wizarding world. I pledge to you on my life and my magic that I will never misuse my abilities against the goblin nation and will do all in my power to see that the unjust treatment of goblins is corrected, as long as there is no wrong doing on the goblin's part. So mote it be!" Harry dropped his head, looking at the floor, hoping he had done the right thing.

Ragnok looked shocked at Harry. I could feel the sincerity and the power behind the oath that he had just sworn. The magic was thick in the air for the President of Gringotts Bank – and the leader of the Goblin Nation, to accept or reject his oath.

Ragnok took another step forward and rested both hands on Harry's shoulders.

"So mote it be." Said Ragnok.

The power that was in the room flared and expanded until it completely surrounded Gringotts Bank.

Stonehand stood there for a moment as if feeling something in the air. "My Lord, there is a new ward around the Bank. It is most unusual. I will have to look into it further..."

"Do not bother Stonehand. It is the protection of a Paladin is it not young Harry?"

"It is sir, and I will, to the best of my ability protect the just and helpless as best I can. But please, be patient with me. I still have much to learn."

"So you do Lord Potter, so you do. It is too bad you do not have a sword with you. We could officially set you apart as a protector of the Goblin Nation."

"With all due respect sir, I have recently obtained a sword to help me in my quest. With Stonehand's permission, I would wish to draw it now."

"A sword? How would you have gotten a sword past security." Stonehand started moving forward getting ready to draw his own sword.

Ragnok held up his hand and stopped Stonehand's advance.

"May I see the sword Lord Potter?" Ragnok questioned.

Holding his hands out in front of him, Harry called his sword to him. "It is called Durendal, the sword of Roland."

All the goblins in the room looked in shock. Stonehand knelt on the floor as the sword appeared in Harry's hands. As a warrior, he had heard the legend and lore of the fabled sword of Roland, and had many years ago dreamed of being able to hold the famous blade. And now here, in this room was someone worthy to wield the sword again.

Ragnok also knew of the fame of the blade, and how only the righteous could hold the blade. He was hesitant to pick up the blade, lest he be judged, and found wanting.

"Go ahead sir, it will not judge you for this." Harry said. And with that reassurance, Ragnok picked up the sword, and as in day of old, appointed Lord Baron Harry James Potter, Baron of Potter, Lord of Ravenclaw a protector and ally of the goblin people – to help them over come oppression, as long as they were in the right.

Again a powerful wave of magic went out from the conference room, and into Harry.

After this ceremony, Ragnok took Harry by the hand and stood him up, handing him back his sword. Harry took the sword and sheathed it. As soon as the sword was back in its scabbard, it disappeared. "You are a very great and noble wizard Lord Potter. Thank you for your service."

"It is you who honor me my Liege. I do have one request – that when the time comes, I may study and learn of goblin magic to better serve you."

Ragnok looked around to Goldridge, and Stonehand to see if they objected. When they both responded that they were okay with the request, Ragnok said: "When the time comes, you will train with Stonehand to learn the fighting technique of the goblins, and with our elders to learn of the magic and warding used in our areas. You do realize you will be under strict oath to only use this magic when it is absolutely necessary?"

"Yes my Liege." Harry responded with a short bow.

"Good, now, we have other business to attend to at this time. Harry I would like to introduce you to the other people who will be on the Board of Inquiry. They are currently being held right outside of this room. Shall I bring them in now?"

"Yes Goldridge, that would be nice."

Griphook opened the door to let a witch and two wizards into the observation chamber.

'Mad-eye' Moody stepped in with his wand drawn. "Would anyone mind telling me what those magical bursts were?" He asked, "I wasn't expecting any additional wards being put up today."

"Do not worry Auror Moody, nothing ill will come from the wards that were enabled today. You may put away your wand." Ragnok said.

"Madam Amelia Bones, Alastor Moody, and Tiberius Ogden. My Lady, gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce you to Lord Baron Harry Potter. Lord Potter, the rest of the committee."

"It's a pleasure to meet all of you, and please, call me Harry."

"Maybe in an informal situation, Lord Potter, but this is a most serious accusation you have brought up against one of the foremost and powerful wizard of light in all of Britain." Said Madam Bones as she looked over Harry while adjusting her monocle.

"Aye boy, you better have all your little ducks in a row if you plan on attacking one of the greatest wizards of our time." Added Tiberius Ogden.

"How about you Mr. Moody, any admonitions regarding my foolish charges against the foremost wizard in the world?" Harry asked.

'Mad-eye' Moody just stood at there looking at Harry with a course smile on what was left of his face.

"Na, with me it's all about CONSTANCE VIGILANCES that counts, if Albus hasn't done what he was tasked to do, then he has something to answer for don't he?"

"Very well, gentlemen, my Lady. Have you all read the will of James and Lily Potter?" Goldridge asked.

"We have."

"Do you have any questions for Lord Potter before we go into the conference room and greet our other guest?"

"Yes. Lord Potter, where do you currently reside?" Madam Bones asked.

"I current live in the cupboard under the stairway at Number Four Privet Drive in Little Surrey, at the home of my Aunt Petunia and Uncle Vernon Dursley." Was Harry's response. He had been waiting for what seemed like years to tell someone that.

"Why has no one known about this before now?" Asked Mr. Ogden.

"It would appear that the good Headmaster did not seem it necessary to inform anyone. It may also be the fact that he has erected two set of wards around my home, including a 'Notice-me-Not' ward approximately five-kilometers away from my home in Little Surrey."

"How did you come to know about you being a wizard and all of this?" Mad-eye asked.

"On my eighth birthday I came into contact with an old trunk that had a lot of my parents letters and writing in it. It explained a lot of who I was, and about this world. The other thing that helped is that one note told me how to get in contact with my parent's old house elf." Harry looked at Ragnok and Goldridge. "Sirs, may I call her here?"

"Yes Lord Potter that would be fine."

"Sassy!" Harry called out. Suddenly beside Harry was a small green elf wearing a tie-dye shirt and sweatpants.

"What happened now Harry; your shoelaces come untied again." Sassy asked with her hands on her hips. She hadn't noticed they had company yet.

"Sassy, not now! You're in front of the committee!" Harry whispered to her.

"Oh, sure you are..." then she started looking around seeing not only the witch and wizards, but also four goblins looking rather amused. "Opps." She said, and immediately changed her cloths to something more appropriate for the situation. "Please forgive me my Lords, my Lady, I thought it was another one of Master Harry's practical jokes. Please forgive me."

Mr. Ogden was quite furious by the lack of 'submission' shown by this house elf, and stepped forward raising his cane to strike Sassy. Before he could act, he found Harry in front of him, with a surprisingly strong death grip on his upraised arm. His eyes were cold as steel, and glowed with the power of a thousand candles.

"May I ask your intentions regarding my house elf Mr. Ogden?" Harry asked coldly, his magic flaring slightly.

Mr. Ogden looked at the glare in Harry's eyes and suddenly had the urge to run away.

"Why... I... will... she... um... someone... show... respect..." he stammered.

"I do not know how you treat your friends Mr. Ogden. But you will not attempt to strike my friend again. Do you understand?"

"Friend? But she's a house elf?" Mr. Ogden stated.

"She may be a house elf Mr. Ogden, but she is still a sentient magical creature, and as such, deserves to be treated as an equal."

"A paladin!" Whispered 'Mad-eye'.

"Indeed, Mr. Moody, it would appear that Lord Potter is on the path of developing into a paladin. Mr. Ogden, I would strongly urge you to lower your cane before Lord Potter lose his temper – It is not a pleasant sight." Ragnok stated.

With Harry still looking very coldly at Mr. Ogden, he slowly lowered his cane, and stepped back from Sassy.

"We called Sassy here to tell how she came into my employ. Sassy if you will?" Harry stepped aside so the other Board members could see and hear her.

Sassy was shaken up by the near attack, and started slipping back into some of her old habits.

"I is being called by Master Harry..." she started.

Harry turned sharply at Sassy and said, "Sassy!" Sassy stopped her comments and looked fearfully at Harry. "Remember who you are and who you represent!"

Sassy looked at Harry for a few moments, then stood up tall and squaring her shoulders, looked again at the Board members.

"I came into the employ of Harry James Potter shortly after his eight birthday as he called for me. My family has been bound to the Potter clan for many generations, and it is my privilege and pleasure to call Lord Potter both Master and friend."

"I am the one who first took Lord Potter to Diagon Alley and Gringotts, where he received the Appointment of the Heir rite and associated rituals. He is the heir of the House of Potter and of the House of Ravenclaw (witch and wizards gasp), and the heir

presumptive of the House of Black. He is my master and my friend, and I serve him willingly, and completely." Sassy had said this last part looking at Harry with pride and affection.

All the members of the Board of Inquiry looked impressed with the little house elf.

Harry turned and faced the wizarding part of the committee. "I want a magically binding oath that you will not disclose my status regarding the House of Ravenclaw to anyone, by any means, and I would like it NOW!" Again Harry's aura flared showing his power and also just how serious he was about the situation.

While keeping his eyes on the witch and wizards, each in turn gave their magical oath to Harry.

"Now, are there any other questions of these two?" Ragnok asked.

"The answers you gave us regarding weren't the whole truth were they Potter?" 'Mad-eye' stated.

"The statements were completely true... as far as they went. I do live in the cupboard under by Aunt and Uncle's staircase. However you are correct Mr. Moody, after my eighth birthday, I was made aware of a multi-chamber trunk that includes a living area. But it too is still in the cupboard under the stairs."

"That's good to remember, for all of you to tell the truth, but only as much as is needed. Don't voluntary anything extra, **CONSTANCE VIGILANCE!**" Moody yelled.

With no other questions, Harry turned to Sassy and said, "Thank you Sassy, you can go back now. If I need you, I'll be sure to call again, but remember where we are okay?"

Sassy blushed and hug her head a little, "Okay Harry, sorry about that," then disappeared from the chamber.

Looking into the conference room next door, Harry could see three people already had been let into the room. The first one he noticed was a stern looking witch with her hair in a tight bun on top of her head. 'That must be Professor McGonagall.' Harry thought. Next was a much smaller wizard talking to her. 'Ah, Professor Flitwick I

presume.' When Harry got to the third person, he had to take a double take. It was the same older man he had run into after his first time at Diagon Alley. 'Remus? 'Ma' is that Remus Lupin?' Harry asked.

'Yes it is dear, why do you ask?'

'The first day I was in Diagon Alley, I ran into him and helped him up before 'sliding' home with Sassy. Why didn't you tell me who he was?'

'Well dear, the only thing I can say is that I was still trying to get over everything Mr. Ollivander had told you and I'm afraid I wasn't paying any attention when you left his shop. I'm sorry dear, I think you would really like Remus.'

"Lord Potter, you will stay here with Griphook unless you are needed to prove a point, at which time, you may enter the chamber any way you would like." Said Ragnok with a smile on his face.

At that time the door to the conference room opened one more time to let in the last participant of the Inquiry, Professor Albus Dumbledore.

If he was surprised to see the other individuals, he didn't show it. He just went over and began to talk to the group as if it were a regular chat. For some reason, the conversation between the Headmaster and his friends seemed to be a bit 'colder' than usual.

"My Lady, Gentlemen, I believe it is time to get this Inquiry going." Stated Goldridge. "If you please..." With that the door between the conference room and the observation chamber opened, and the members of the Board of Inquiry entered the room.

As the door opened, the people already in the conference room looked at who was coming through the door. Upon seeing Goldridge leading the procession, the other occupants in the conference room also took their assigned seats; the professors and Mr. Lupin off to the left of the room, Professor Dumbledore directly in front of the Board.

"Thank you all for coming, you may all be seated. On the behest of the Head of the House of Potter, I call this Board of Inquiry in

session." Goldridge begins. "This meeting is to rule on the fitness of Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore to remain executor of the will of James Harold and Lily Evens Potter. All those present are sworn upon their magic to tell the truth. The proceedings of this Board will not be made public, and all participants are forbidden to discuss the results with anyone not associated with this hearing. So mote it be."

"So mote it be." The other people in the room said.

"Excuse me Mr. Chairman, but how can this be called on behalf of the Head of the House of Potter, when there is no current Head of that house? To the best of my knowledge Harold Potter was the last installed Head of the House of Potter. I know that after his death, James did not go through the Appointment of the Heir rite and rituals and now that he is gone, that would only leave young Harry and I have it on good authority that he has not been here to undergo the rites and rituals also. So again I ask, how can you call this inquiry on behalf of the House of Potter?" Professor Dumbledore was quite proud of his logic.

"Professor Dumbledore, do you claim to still have the signet ring of the House of Potter? Could you please summon it forth?" Goldridge ask. He knew that as soon as the ring was summoned, it would go to the true Head of the House of Potter.

"Of course Mr. Chairman." And Professor Dumbledore held out his hand to summon the signet ring. As soon as the signet ring appeared in his hand, it disappeared again. "What is the meaning of this?" Professor Dumbledore bellowed. "What have you done with my signet ring?" He challenged.

"We have done nothing Professor Dumbledore. We are just showing you that you are no longer the Head of House Pro-tempore as the true Head of House has accepted his place."

"This can not be! Show me the imposter who claims to be the Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter!" Dumbledore demanded his aura starting to show.

"Lord Baron Potter, I was hoping this could be avoided, but it seems that Professor Dumbledore wishes to meet you." Said Goldridge.

"That won't be a problem Mr. Chairman." Said a cold voice from the space directly in front of Professor Dumbledore. Harry had been listening in the observation room for as long as he could, but when he heard that Professor held the family signet ring since his grandfather had passed away, he started to get 'upset'. He asked 'Ma' why his father hadn't become the Head of House.

'As far as I can remember Harry, Your grandfather died when your father was in his fifth year. I didn't know he could become the Head of House at that time, but after graduation, the subject just never came up.'

Harry was starting to dislike this Professor Dumbledore more and more. And then when he heard him being called an imposter, he just about lost it! Harry decided that this man would have to know that he was not playing with a little child anymore. He may not be able to match the old wizard power or spells, but he would let this old manipulating fool know that he was no imposter, and his days of deceitfulness were over. Harry called up his magic from his core, but instead of just letting it out, he decided to let it radiate through his aura since it seemed that that is what this man understood.

Harry went invisible and 'slid' into the conference room directly in front of Professor Dumbledore. As Dumbledore had summoned the Potter signet ring, it immediately came to Harry. Who grabbed it and put it on his right ring finger.

As Goldridge asked Harry to show himself, he was already in the room standing in front of Professor Dumbledore. He came out of his house elf invisible shield, and turned on his aura as full and looked straight at him.

Holding up his right hand for all to see the signet ring, Harry declared: "I, Harry James Potter, swear on my life and on my magic that I am the true and legitimate Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter. So mote it be!"

With the Potter signet ring on his hand, the bond that occurred between Harry and the ring was something to behold. There was no doubt that the young man before them was indeed the true Head of the House of Potter.

"Let the records show that I, Harry James Potter, did request Goldridge to call this Board of Inquiry regarding the fitness of one Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore to remain executor of the last will and testament of James Harold and Lily Evens Potter."

"Mr. Chairman, I hope I am not out of line, but I would like the entire will to be read into the record."

"That will not be necessary Harry..." started Professor Dumbledore.

"YES, it is necessary Professor Dumbledore. These proceeding may be closed to the public, and this may only be regarding you acting as the executor of my parents will, but I want every person in this room to know how much you disregarded their wants and wishes. And it's Lord Potter to you sir." Harry spat out.

As Goldridge read the last will and testament into the records, Professor Dumbledore was thinking quickly.

'When did Harry get here? How long has he known? How did he get past the wards at Little Surrey? How did he come to be standing directly in front of me? There was no invisibility cloak. Does he know how to apparate? No, the wards in the room won't let me apparate, or use a portkey for that matter. How long can he let that aura flare like that? He appears to be just about as powerful as me right now, but how? I do not detect any dark rituals, is there something that I could have missed? Does he know about the prophecy? I must get him back under by control so that I can train him!

Professor Dumbledore was brought out of his thinking when the Chairman of the Board addressed him.

"Professor Dumbledore, did you accept the role of executor of this will after the deaths of James and Lily Potter of you own free will."

"Yes."

"Did you attempt to place Harry James Potter with is appointed guardian, Sirius Orion Black?"

"No, I had Hagrid take Harry from Sirius and bring him to Hogwarts."

"For what purpose?"

"Everyone knew that Sirius Black was the Secret keeper, only he could have brought Voldemort to the Potter's home. I felt it in the best interest of the boy to bring him to Hogwarts since he had sustained some injuries that night."

"Did you allow Mr. Black to accompany Hagrid back to Hogwarts with him."

"No, again, I did not think it wise to bring a Death-eater into the confines of Hogwarts."

Harry's magic flared even more, as he said in a very cold voice: "Sirius was not a Death-eater, nor was he the Secret keeper – But that is for a different time." Several people gasped at the statement, both on the Board, and the other three members present.

"Thank you Lord Potter, now if you don't mind..." Goldridge chided.

"Forgive me, my lord, I just could not bear to hear my Godfather spoken of badly from this man." Harry gave Dumbledore another cold stare. And for the first time Dumbledore wondered if he had done the right thing in taking Harry away from Sirius.

"Professor Dumbledore, can you tell us why Harry could not have been returned to his Godfather after he had recovered from his injuries?"

"According to Auror reports, two days later, on November 2nd, Sirius cornered his friend Peter Pettigrew on a busy muggle street. Peter started to ask Sirius why he had betrayed the Potters. There was an explosion in which it is assumed Peter was killed along with 17 muggle with one curse. When the Aurors arrived, they said Mr. Black was laughing wildly saying something about 'he pranked us all.' A search was made for Mr. Pettigrew's body, but only a single finger was found. At the time it would seem that all of the eyewitness claimed it was Mr. Black attacked Mr. Pettigrew. Mr. Black was taken directly to Azkaban Prison on order of the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge. In short, Mr. Black was not available to take over the duties as guardian at that time."

'Mad-eye' Moody spoke up at this time. "But Albus, isn't it a fact that you had already taken young Harry to his Aunt's and Uncle's on the morning of the second?"

"I believe that is correct."

"And wasn't it sometime around 5:00 PM before young Mr. Black was taken into custody?"

"I am not sure of the exact time."

"But isn't it a fact that Black was taken into custody after young Harry had already been placed in the Dursley's home?"

"... Yes ... I believe I was acting in the best interest of the greater good of the wizarding world."

"Professor Dumbledore, let us get back to the stated preference's of the will as to who should have been guardian of young Mr. Potter." It was Ragnok that was taking up the line of questioning at this point.

"Tell me, why were Alice and Frank Longbottom not considered as appropriate guardians?"

"The night the Potter's were attacked, the Longbottom's were also attacked. But instead of killing them, they were driven out of their minds by the Lestrangle's, and Barty Crouch Jr. They were captured and given a trial, and then sent to Azkaban.

"What of the other candidates for Guardianship, Mr. Lupin, Professor McGonagall, or Professor Flitwick?"

"Mr. Lupin suffers from lycanthrope, making it impossible for him to be a guardian. How would he watch a young infant during a full moon?"

The Headmaster's words wounded Remus deeply. He did not expect him to use that as an excuse to where he would cut Harry out of his life completely. Remus wonder again if the Headmaster really cared for him, or just needed someone to be a messenger between the Order of the Phoenix, and the other Werewolves.

"And Professors McGonagall or Flitwick?"

"As capable and responsible as Minerva is, she is getting up in years, and ill fitted to start mothering again. As for Professor Flitwick, I am afraid there would have been a culture clash as young Harry grew older."

Both of his 'friends' were looking at the Headmaster as if they were ready to just about murder him. How dare he assume they would be unwilling or unfit to raise Harry in a healthy, happy environment. The main point that seemed to be the main sticking point was that he had made the discussion on his own, without even talking to them about it. In fact, none of the three potential guardians even knew they had been considered until after the goblins had summoned them to the hearing, and sent them a copy of the will.

"Professor Dumbledore, can you please enlighten us as to who Lord Potter's current magical guardian is?"

"I would suppose that would be me."

"Are you also his physical guardian?"

"No, that would be the Dursley's."

"Why were the Dursley's chosen when the will specifically states that there is to be no contact with them until Harry is eleven?"

"While searching through the magically binding contracts in the Hall of Records, I found that Mrs. Petunia Evens Dursley owed James Harold Potter a life-debt. Since Petunia was Lily's only living relative, I could use blood magic, and blood runes as a protection for Harry."

"Professor, who is getting the stipend for raising Harry at this time?" Ragnok asked.

"... I am."

"How much is the stipend each month."

"I couldn't really tell you Ragnok. I don't pay attention to it."

"Does the sum of 2,000 galleons a month ring a bell?"

"If you say so, I really don't notice."

The other three potential guardians gasped at the amount that their headmaster dismissed as nothing. For Remus, two months stipend would be about what he made in an entire year! Professors McGonagall and Flitwick were well compensated for their teaching, but not that well. That amount would go a long way in providing some of the finer things in life.

"How much of this stipend is given to the Dursley's for their raising Harry?"

"None of it."

"Let us move on to the bequeaths. Professor Dumbledore, have any of the bequeaths been made up to this point?"

"In the case of Sirius Black, He is currently spending time in Azkaban. In the case of Peter Pettigrew, he was believed to have been killed by Mr. Black, and I might point out, his body has never been found or seen. And in the case of Remus Lupin... I have no answer. I just thought giving a werewolf that much money all at once wouldn't been good for him."

The Headmaster turned to look at Remus and said, "Forgive me old friend, but it was for the greater good."

Remus was having a hard time containing himself. He could have been taking care of Harry. He could have had land and money to help him rebuild his life. And the one man who he use to think of as a grandfather had taken all of it away from him.

"Professor, have you done anything in accordance with the last will and testament of James and Lily Potter?" Asked Madam Bones.

"I have done what I felt was in the greater good of the wizarding world, and for Harry benefit."

That did it. Harry's magic spiked much like it had the last time he was at Gringotts Bank, and everything not nailed down started to fly around.

"FOR MY BENEFIT? FOR MY BENEFIT YOU SEND ME TO LIVE IN HELL FOR THE PAST SEVEN YEARS?"

"LORD POTTER!" yelled Goldridge. "YOU WILL CONTROL YOURSELF!"

Harry looked from Dumbledore to Goldridge and back to Dumbledore before he nodded his head and took several deep breaths and brought his magic back into himself.

Everyone else that was in the room who hadn't seen the last magical outburst was flabbergasted. How could someone so young have so much power! It appeared to be as powerful as anything Professor Dumbledore had ever done, who at the moment was looking wide-eyed at the young man. What had he done? Had he created another Voldemort? He had to subdue the young man. Without even think, Professor Dumbledore drew his wand and cast a powerful stunner at Harry.

As the spell got close to Harry, his shields activated close to his skin, to where the other people couldn't see them. As the spell was absorbed into the shield, Harry turned fully to face his attacker and began to slowly advance on him.

Everyone in the room was totally shocked that the stunner had not had any visible effect on Harry, and as he approached Professor Dumbledore, he began to panic. He fired another stunner with the same results. He tried a full body bind, but nothing happened. He tried subduing him with ropes, but as the ropes approached Harry, a sword appeared in Harry's hand to cut through them. He tries a Banishing Charm, but Harry just flicked the sword and knocked it away.

By this time Harry was within striking distance but instead of striking, he just brought the sword up to Dumbledore's heart. Harry just stands there as the blade starts to glow a bright light yellow.

After a few moments, Harry said, "You do believe in your heart that you are doing the right thing. But be warned; your time is passed. A new generation will rise to take care of the current plague. So says Durendal of Roland."

Harry moves away from the Headmaster, and turns to the other three observers. "Mr. Lupin, Professor McGonagall, Professor Flitwick, I would like to apologize to you for my lack of control. I would like to have time to get to know each of you better. When the time is right, call for my house elf Sassy to bring you to where I am currently staying."

Turning to the Board of Inquiry Harry said, "My Lords and Lady, I ask your forgiveness also for my unseemly display. I leave in your hands the outcome of this hearing. I will return later to hear the results."

And finally he turned to Professor Dumbledore. Looking him straight in the eyes Harry said, "My parents trusted you. They loved you as a father or grandfather. They thought you would be the one person who would look out after their son. AND YOU GO AND DO THIS, AND FOR WHAT? WHAT GREATER GOOD? YOU HAVE TAKEN AWAY THE FREE AGENCY AND CHOICE OF NOT JUST ME, BUT OF AN ENTIRE GENERATION! You are not a god Headmaster; you do not know all things. You do not know the end from the beginning. You need to let the people make their choices and their mistakes. How do you expect them to grow if they do not?"

"Regardless of the outcome of this Board of Inquiry, I expect wards around Number Four Privet Drive to be down no later than September 11th, or Durendal (Harry holds up the sword to show everyone) and I will take them down for you."

Harry turns back to the head table, bowed, and slowly disappears.

The entire room is silent after Harry's departure. Each person was caught up in what they had just seen and heard from an eight-year-old boy.

End Chapter 12Next Chapter – Results of the Inquiry

Essences of Lily – Chapter 13 – Results of the Inquiry

Repost:

Number Four Privet Drive Evening of August 28th, 1988

Harry 'slid' back to Number Four Privet drive exhausted and sad. Going into his bedroom, he locked the door, threw himself on his bed, and started to cry uncontrollable.

He felt betrayed, he felt lost, and he felt like an eight-year-old boy who had just had his world torn apart.

The person his parents trusted more than anyone else in the world had completely betrayed their trust. What would have happened if Hagrid hadn't taken him away from Sirius? Or if Sirius had followed Hagrid to Hogwarts? Or if Harry would have been returned to Sirius on the morning of November 2nd before he had found Peter?

But none of that mattered any more. All of that was in the past and nothing he could do could change that.

And now his future seemed to be set as well. He had decided to be a Paladin, when most kids his age are thinking about being a fireman, or a policeman, or a schoolteacher. He's eight-years-old for crying out loud! Not 18!

He had even performed his first few tasks as a Paladin – He had pledged on his life and his magic to help and support the goblin nation; and he had challenged, and he had 'judged' Professor Dumbledore's intent as to his actions regarding his parents Will.

Did He even realize what the pledge meant? What if Professor Dumbledore would not have been 'light' in his intent? What would he have done as a Paladin? Could he have 'stricken down' Professor Dumbledore? Could he kill if called upon?

Harry knew he did not have the life experience, knowledge, judgment or training to really know what he would be required to do. It must not have been too bad since 'Ma' didn't try to stop him from saying the pledge, but Harry was now trying to figure out what it really meant and he knew that he couldn't do it by himself.

"It's not fair!" He said to himself as his little fist hit the pillow. "When am I going to get a 'normal' childhood? Why do I have to be the one that grows up so fast?"

"First my parents are killed, then I get sent to this hell hole, then I find out I have all of these neat powers, but I can't use them in front of the muggles.

Harry hadn't changed out of his cloths after coming from the bank. As he lay on his bed, he slowly cried himself to sleep.

'Ma' for her part also felt sad at Harry's loss of faith in humanity. She had tried to comfort him by singing lullabies as she had when he was younger. She didn't like seeing Harry having to grow up so fast. She had been very proud of him for the way he handled the situation with the Goblins, but looking back on it now, she could see how that act had robbed a great deal of his childhood. She understood the pledge. She had been sure that Dumbledore would pass the judgment of Durendal, but she could see the situation Harry was currently in. 'What if Dumbledore would not have passed the judgment? What would have been expected of Harry then as a Paladin, and a sworn ally of the goblins?' 'Ma' found herself trembling at the thought.

'Ma' was aware that Harry was asleep now. His mind was still worried over the actions of the day, but very soon, he would be with her in his subconscious where she could hug him and hold him and talk to him about all everything that had happened that day. At least, that is what she had imagined would happen.

'Ma' notices that Harry was sleeping deeper the usually. There also seemed to be another power completely surrounding Harry. 'Ma' noticed on the edge of the landscape she created in Harry's mind a 'fog' starting to develop. There was nothing malevolent regarding the fog, just the opposite, there was a calming, peaceful feeling coming from that direction. It seemed to radiate the purest love and power she had ever felt.

Slowly, in the midst of the fog, 'Ma' saw the tower of a medieval castle slowly materialize. The landscape expanded to include a mote, drawbridge, road, and items from a time long since pasted. After a period of time, 'Ma' became aware of a solider, or more

specifically, a knight walking out of the fog, down the path towards her.

'Forgive me fair Lady. It seems that I have waken from a long slumber. Could you kindly tell me, I pray thee, what year this may be? Where is this place; how did I come to get here; and how pray tell did you come to be in this place also. For I know this much, it is a place of the mind, for I had long ago dwelt in a place like this to help my friend Prince Roland.'

'Ma' was in shock for a few moments before reality struck her. This was Durendal – or the essences and power that resided in the sword.

Curtsying low 'Ma' addressed the knight before her, 'My lord. You are in the year of our Lord 1988. This place is the mind of my son, Harry James Potter. You are here now because my son currently holds 'Durendal', the sword of power given to the famed paladin Roland. In life I was known as Lily Evens Potter, I am the essence of her thoughts, knowledge, and experience. I was created here as a dark wizard killed my person in life.'

'You have answered well Lady Potter. I knew of you and your son when he extended his magic in the shop prior. Please forgive me for testing you this way.'

'How should I address you kind sir? I know you are not Roland, but are the essences and power of the blessed sword Durendal.'

'That issue shall be addressed later when your blessed son joins us. If you will forgive me, I have placed him in a well-deserved dreamless sleep. It is you I wish to talk to first.'

'In life, you were his mother, and loved him deeper than all but a few women have ever loved their sons, however, I am concerned for his welfare. He has taken upon his small shoulders a task that he is ill prepared for. It is not that he lacks power, desire, drive, or determination. It is simply that he has not been schooled in the way of the paladin yet. He has not studied as a page or squire yet he strives to do the work of a knight, and while he has acquainted himself well so far, there is still much he does not know and understand. I do not fault you in this matter, I know it was but a few

days previous that you had even thought of him as a paladin, but I ask that I be permitted to help teach and train him.'

'It would normally take seven years to teach and train your son in all the duties of a page, but we do not have that much time, do we milady?'

'No sir, you speak the truth. Harry is also a child of prophecy. It would seem that he is the only person who can possibly vanquish the Dark Lord who will return, Voldemort.'

'Ah yes, this Voldemort represents to evil what your son represents for good. Yet I also sense a small part of the anti-paladin here in your son. Could you please show me the source?'

'Ma' took Durendal to look at Harry's magical power core. He was impressed with the size of the core for one so young. When he saw where 'Tom Riddle's' power core fragment had attached itself to Harry's he was concerned.

'The fact that the core is still valid proves that this 'Tom Riddle' is not fully passed from this world.' Durendal said. 'This will be a source of great knowledge and greater temptation for young Harry as he grows older. I wish it were simply a matter of removing this vial poison from your son, but this is something that he will have to overcome by himself. It will be our responsibility to see that he is trained and knows well the difference between good and evil – even the gentle shades of gray such as the ones which the once great wizard Dumbledore has succumbed to.'

'If Harry cannot avoid these things, I fear he will be far worse than either Dumbledore or Voldemort.'

'Lady Potter, though I am but the essence of thy son's blade, I offer myself to also be his mentor and teacher. To help lead Harry on the true path of a paladin.'

'I have noticed in his mind that we are currently residing in a magical object of many chambers and that in one of these chambers, you have the ability to slow the effects of time by many fold.'

'Yes my lord, chamber eight; the rites and rituals chamber. Slowing time is only one of its functions. Right now Harry is too young to participate in any of the rituals.'

'I would encourage you to use caution when performing rituals in this chamber. Young master Harry has already expanded his core and mind to the point where it may actually be harmful to do it more using another ritual. Just continue using the spells he has in the past and he should be alright.'

'I have taken it upon my self to include the time dilatation function in the formation of the castle you see yonder. While young master Harry is there, he will experience a similar affect while here in his mind. That is to say, of every eight hours he spends here, it shall be ten days in the castle. He will only be able to use this function once in a 24 hour period. That will give me time to teach him the ways of the paladin from a youth and to provide him with a strong body as well as a strong spirit.'

'I think that Harry should be the one to make that decision. I of course will support him in whatever he decides. I do feel that it is in Harry's best interest to learn the basics before goes much further. Could you please let him come here now?' 'Ma' asked.

Almost before 'Ma' had finished asking Durendal to let Harry come up and join them, she saw him walking through the fog into the clearing close to her.

'Wow 'Ma'! I love what you've done to the place! Neat castle. Who's is it?'

'Yours my Liege.' Answered Durendal. Harry had not noticed him at first. When Durendal spoke, Harry reacted by getting into a defensive stance, ready for action as his 'Ma' had taught him.

'Please be not afraid young master. I mean neither you nor Lady Potter any harm. I am the essence of the sword formerly known as Durendal. Since I am in your possession, you are my master, and as such, have the right to either pronounce a new name that I will be known as, or you may retain my current name.' Durendal said with a bow.

'I think I like your current name. It sounds pretty cool, and I liked the goblins reaction when they saw that I was carrying you.' Said Harry.

'Thank you my lord. I have grown rather fond of the name to tell the truth.'

'Now, how about the castle. 'Ma', do you know of any other castle's owned by the Potter's?'

'I believe there is one in Scotland, and possible the old family fortress somewhere in England.'

'So why don't we call this castle 'Potter in the Mind'? I know it sounds corny, but what do you expect from an eight year old?'

'That will suffice for now my lord.' Came Durendal's replied.

Durendal and 'Ma' then told Harry everything they had talked about, and how time would be slowed down even further in the castle. It would still take a little more then 255 'outside' days to accomplish the seven years worth of training as a page, and another 255 'outside' days to complete the training of a squire – or as Durendal referred to them 'Shield bearer' or 'arms bearer' meaning that he would have to learn how to take care of, and properly use many different types of weapons. If Harry were to take advantage of the time dilatation in chamber eight, it would take a full factor off of the training time from 255 days to 25.5 days! And since he could only use the chamber for eight hours a day, he would still have time to a kid and experience a 'normal' life. Harry was thrilled to actually receive training from Durendal.

Harry woke from his nap feeling more complete. He now had someone who could actually show him what it meant to be a paladin, and how to train for it. The only setback being he would have to be in a meditative state to go to 'Potter in the Mind'. Now if he could just get someone in the 'outside' world to help him as a young boy and wizard.

The Board of Inquiry

All the people in the Conference room holding the Board of Inquiry were looking in awe at the place young Harry had stood just a few moments ago. The goblins in the group knew that Harry could use

some house elf magic, and had surmised that he has just thought that he had 'modified' the way the house elf's become invisible, and then 'slid' home. Professor Dumbledore was shocked greatly, and was lucky to have made it back to his chair before collapsing into it.

The witches and wizards though had no idea Harry could do that. After several minutes, Tiberius Ogden cleared his throat, and continued. "There are still a few issues that have not been covered from the content of the Will."

"Professor Dumbledore, have you had any contact with Lord-Baron Potter since his eighth birthday to discuss the management of his families businesses?"

"I am sorry to say, no."

"Have you been using the right of Lord-Baron Potter to vote for him in his stead?"

"Alas, that is the only point that I can answer – yes – to."

"Professor Dumbledore, do you have anything to say for yourself with regards to your actions as executor of James and Lily Potter's will?"

Looking unfazed and sure of himself, Professor Dumbledore looked at the members of the Board of Inquiry with his usual twinkle in his eye. "I know it would appear to those not aware of all the facts, with regards to young Mr. Potter, but I feel that under the circumstance that provisions stated in James and Lily's will were not in the best interest of the wizarding world, or of the greater good. It was with great thought and consideration that I placed Harry in a situation where he could grow up as a normal young man and not feel the weight of the entire wizarding world on his young shoulders. I can assure you that I have always had only Harry's best interest, and those of the wizarding worlds at heart."

The members of the board were shocked and a little taken back at the brazen attitude displayed by the one wizard, who, more than most, was looked upon as a leader of the light, and doing what was right.

"How many times have you visited Lord Potter at his current location since you have placed him there? Madam Bones asked.

"Alas, I have only had occasion to visit Mr. Potters abode once in the past seven years, and that was at night."

"Were you able to talk to Lord Potter at that time? Where did you find him located at? What was the reason for the visit?"

"Again, Mr. Potter and the rest of the residents of the house were sleeping at the time of the visit, so no, I did not have the opportunity to talk to him at that time. As I recall, young Mr. Potter must have fallen asleep prior to making it to his room, for I found him in one of the cupboards directly under the stairs. He appeared to be sleeping quite soundly at the time. As to why I was there, one of the main wards around the house had indicated that there may have been some problems at the residence, but again, when I arrived, I found all to be quite and peaceful."

"Professor Dumbledore, would it surprise you to know that the cupboard you found Lord Potter in was in fact his assigned room at the Dursley's?" Ragnok asked. "We have irrefutable evidence that the Dursley's have been using Lord Potter for their personal house elf since he was the age of three."

Both Remus and Professor McGonagall gasp on hearing this. What had Albus done to that sweet young boy? Minerva thought back to the time she spent watching the Dursleys before Albus brought Harry there. Hearing this just confirmed that indeed, they were the worst type of muggles if they would treat their own flesh and blood no better than a house elf.

For his part, Dumbledore looked shocked – but only for a moment. "I'm sure there must be some misunderstanding. Family does not treat their members that way."

"And what do ya base that notion on Albus?" Moody asked. "Min, didn't you say you watched those muggles before Albus brought young Potter there? What was your opinion of them?"

Shifting nervously, Professor McGonagall stood up from her chair, stepped forward, and addressed the board.

"Yes Alastor, I spent the entire day watching them to see what type of people they were. To see if they had changed any since I met them during a baby-shower that had been held for both Petunia and Lily. I observed that they were still just as petty, just as closed-minded, and just as mean if not more so now than they were then. I argued with Albus not to leave him there." She lowered her head, and a tear started rolling down her cheek. "But Albus assured me that Harry would be protected there, and would grow up loved. I'm sorry Lily, I failed your son."

Turning and looking at Albus she fixed him with the hardest, coldest stare she could. "I would have taken him in an instant as raised him as Lily and James would have wanted. BUT YOU DIDN'T EVEN GIVE ME A CHANCE! I WOULD HAVE SHOWN HIM LOVE! I WOULD HAVE RAISED KNOWING WHO HIS PARENTS WERE, AND HOW THEY LOVED HIM! BUT YOU DIDN'T EVEN GIVE ME A CHANCE!"

Minerva broke down and started to cry uncontrollable. "You didn't give me a chance!" She said weakly. Remus stood up and gathered Professor McGonagall by the shoulders and just held her. She fell into his grasp, and he helped her back to her chair. The look he was giving his old headmaster was one of hate and great disappointment. If Dumbledore would have been watching, he would have noticed the same look from Professor Flitwick as well.

During this time, Professor Dumbledore kept his grandfatherly appearance, with an expression that would say that he didn't understand why Professor McGonagall and Remus would be so mad at him. He was doing what was for the Greater Good. Surely they understood that.

After thing were settled down, Goldridge addressed the other members of the Board. "Normally at this time the Board of Inquiry would dismiss to see if just cause exists for the guardian to be removed having failed in their fiduciary responsibilities, or if the executor has failed to uphold and execute the terms of the Will. However, I do not believe such a break is necessary in light of the evidence presented. I now poll the other Board members to see if they feel that such a recess is warranted.

Ragnok? Do you feel that Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore has faithfully fulfilled his responsibility as executor of the James and Lily Potter will, and as such, should remain in that position?"

"No."

"Stonehand?"

"No."

"Madam Bones?"

"Most defiantly not!"

"Auror Moody?"

"Nay."

"Councilor Ogden?"

"Sorry Albus. No."

"Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore, you are hereby removed as executor of the Will of James Harold, and Lily Evens Potter. You are also released of your duty as magical guardian of Lord-Baron Harry James Potter. All rights, privileges and duties are revoked. Custody of any and all documents, keys or artifacts belonging to the Potter estate is to be returned to this Board of Inquiry by the end of the day. You are bound by your magic to see that this is done properly and correctly. Not as you see fit, or what you believe is in the interest of the 'Greater Good', but to be fully and completely accomplished. You are also to be placed on probation with Gringotts for an undetermined time."

"You will not be recognized as a trustee or executor in any further business dealing from this time forth."

"If at some future time, Durendal, the sword of Roland... the sword of Lord Potter, finds you worthy, these restrictions will be lifted. Do you understand the ruling of this Board?"

Professor Dumbledore was shocked at the ruling of the Board. Indeed, it seemed that he aged fifty years as he heard the decision

of the Board announced. He slowly lowered his head into his hands as the magnitude of the wrongs he had committed became apparent to him. Not only against James, Lily, and Harry, but against many – like Remus Lupin and others who had looked to him for help and guidance, and had placed him on a pedestal. It would now appear that that pedestal was made with a base of sand.

However, there was another part of Professor Dumbledore that felt like a little spoiled brat that had just got his hand caught in the cookie jar for the first time after many, many years. That it was not fair for others to correct HIM. He felt to some degree that HE knew what was best for them all. But as he reviewed his activities over the last fifty plus years, he recognized he had been wrong.

In somewhat of an epiphany (an 'Ah ha' moment for you and me), Albus could see that he did not have the right to make decisions for others. He saw how he had adversely affected many people, even entire families for generations and most of the time, for the worse – just for his personal gain, power or prestige.

This had to stop. He would have to find some way of making restitution for everything he had taken. The first step would start today, with the Potter's and their estate.

"Yes Goldridge." He said quietly.

"Then, so mote it be." Goldridge stated.

"So mote it be." The Headmaster repeated and a flash of magic acknowledged the oath he had taken. "Now, if the Board will excuse me, I have many items that need to be returned. With that, the old Headmaster arose from his chair, bowed to the Board members. Turned to the other three people in the chamber he said, with a genuine tear in his eye: "I pray in time you too will be able to forgive me of the shortcomings you have seen this day. I pledge to improve in the way I live my life." With that, a chastened, and slightly humbled Headmaster left the conference room.

Professors McGonagall and Flitwick just stared at the Headmaster as he left, not knowing what to think of the man who had been their Headmaster and friend for over 50 years. Why had they not seen it before? They know there were times where he did things for the 'greater good' for Hogwarts, but had he also done it to individual

people and families? They both wondered, 'How much has he manipulated ME over the last 50 years?'

Remus, for his part could not even look at the Headmaster. Any respect he had for the man had just been destroyed over the course of the last 30 minutes. He had ignored James and Lily's wishes in their will; he had placed Harry with the worst type of magic hating muggles he could find. He had kept him in poverty so that he would be 'forced' to do his bidding with the werewolves. Had he known about the secret keeper switch? If he did, he basically killed James and Lily, and had Sirius shipped off to Azkaban just to get him out of the way.

He wanted to rip the Headmaster limb from limb for hurting so many people he knew and loved, but he knew that the person who had first claim on the Headmaster would be Harry. He wanted to be with Harry so bad right now. How was this young boy holding up with everything go to hell all around him?

"There will be a twenty minute break after which a new executor and magical guardian will be appointed for Lord-Baron Harry James Potter.

You will find some tea and biscuits on the table in the back of the room." Goldridge announced. He and the other Board members retired to the observation room to have their own tea and biscuits and to talk about the next part of their meeting.

Conference Room

Professor McGonagall got up and went to the back of the room. She conjured a smaller table and chairs and levitated the refreshments to it, then poured three cups and looked back at the others.

"Come on you two, we don't have all day. I'm just as shocked as you are... devastated really," she said sadly, "but we have to move on and see what we can do that is in Harry's best interest. May James and Lily forgive me for not checking on him sooner."

"You're right of course Minerva. I just can't get over it though! I thought I knew Albus, but to see what he has done as executor of the Potter's will... its downright criminal! I'm surprised Amelia, or

Mad-eye didn't come down here and arrest him!" Professor Flitwick said.

"I don't know about you two, but I'm still thinking about what Harry said regarding Sirius not being the secret keeper." Remus started out, sipping his tea.

"Lily and James had three possibilities for their secret-keeper, Sirius, Peter, and me. Lily wanted me, but James thought Sirius would be a better choice. James was hesitant with me due to my condition, and the fact that Voldemort was so active in recruiting my kind. The only thing I can think of is that Sirius must have suggested a 'diversion'."

"Now, tell me Professor Flitwick, if you were He-who-must-not-be-named, and one of your enemies were going into hiding, and using one of the three mentioned individuals as a secret keeper, who do you think he would use?"

"Why, Mr. Black of course. Those two were more like brothers than friends... not meaning to hurt your feelings Remus, but you know what I mean... don't you?"

"Yes Professor, don't worry about it, I know exactly what you mean."

"Professor McGonagall, who do you think James would pick?"

"Why Black of course. I must agree with Filius, those two were brothers in every way but blood."

"But if what Harry said is correct, and Sirius was not the secret keep, then who was and why? Why was Sirius caught after he had 'cornered' Peter two days later?"

"They changed secret-keepers?"

"They changed secret-keepers!"

"Oh my word! Sirius is innocent! We've got to get him out of Azkaban, but how? Without Peter's body there isn't a way." Minerva stated sadly.

"That's a problem we can take on later. Right now, we have another problem before us. I'm assuming both of you would like to be involved in raising Harry wouldn't you?" Ask Professor Flitwick.

"Of course Filius, you know James and Lily were not only in my house, but they were also two of my favorite students and after graduation, I would have liked to have considered them good friends" answered Professor McGonagall.

"You don't have to ask me twice. James and Lily were two of my dearest friends. I loved going to their house and playing with Harry. It was some of the only times I didn't feel alone. Harry and his family made me feel complete." Said Remus with a tear in his eyes and a lump in his throat as he thought about the time he had spent with the Potter's.

"Well then, I have a proposal for both of you." The diminutive Professor said.

"When the Board of Inquiry comes back in, they will have two functions: one, to appoint a new executor over the Potter's Will, and two, to appoint a magical guardian for Harry. I propose that we work together so that we can all have an active input into his life."

"That sounds great Professor, what do you have in mind?" Remus was concerned about the extent he could really be in Harry's life because of his Lycanthrope.

"I want you both to listen to everything I have to say before you interrupt alright? Good. Now, according to the term of the Will, the executor cannot be considered for the position of guardian, but must meet with Harry often to talk about his business holdings, and train him in business management and the wizarding world in general. Since there is still a bias against those of us who are not 'normal' by wizarding standards, Remus and I would have a hard time being accepted as guardian."

"What I propose is that Minerva, you be appointed as Harry's guardian and I be the executor of the will."

Remus was feeling a bit left out at this point, but Filius quickly added, "Remus, I will not leave you out. You see, even though the wizarding world will hear that Min is Harry's new guardian, she is

going to need a great deal of help in watching a young child as she must also fulfill her responsibilities as the deputy headmistress, and transfiguration professor, and may only be able to spend oh, I don't know, maybe six to eight days a month with the young man. Now who do you think she could get to watch Harry that knew both of his parents, and would make sure the young man grew up knowing all about the 'alleged' pranks they pulled while at Hogwarts?"

By this time Remus was smiling. He knew exactly what Professor Flitwick was doing. The wizarding world would never accept a werewolf as guardian over Harry, but he could 'visit' Harry as much as he wanted or have Harry over with Professor McGonagall as the guardian of record. He looked at both professors to make sure he had heard everything correct. When he saw they were both smiling, Remus sat down his cup and put his head in his hands and started to cry. Professor McGonagall got up and came around to Remus to see what the matter was.

"Thank you." He whispered. "Thank you so very, very much!"

Observation Room

As the members of the Board of Inquiry entered the Observation room, a general sigh of relief was heard from the wizards.

"I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes. Albus Dumbledore, the pillar of all that is good, caught failing to perform his duty to a family of the light!" Tiberius Ogden stated.

"If these matters had been brought out in the Wizengamot he would be stripped of his position, arrested, and in all probability, sent to Azkaban." Said Madam Bones coldly. "To think that he was completely above the law as to not even make the attempt to execute the Potter's Will! And why do I get the impression there is much more to the story than you are letting us know Goldridge?"

"Because you have a keen mind and an incredible intellect." Replied Goldridge as he directed the party to the table with the tea and biscuits."

"If ya don't mind, I'll just keep to my hip flask." Said Mad-eye. "I thought Albus was playing fast and loose with some of the rules, but I had no idea it had gone this far. Ha, it looks like this little Potter's

going to be one to look out for. If he can face down Dumbledore at eight, maybe he can face down ol' snake-face by the time he graduates Hogwarts, if not before."

"Goldridge, what did the Potter boy mean when he said that Black wasn't a Death-eater, or the Secret Keeper for the Potter's?"

Goldridge set down his cup of tea and looked at the witch and wizards in front of him seriously.

"Information has been brought to our attention from Lord-Baron Potter that clearly shows that Sirius Black was not the Secret Keeper of the Potter's, and is, in fact innocent of the crimes he was accused of, but never put on trial for."

Madam Bones, Mr. Ogden, and Mad-eye all put their drinks down, and looked at Goldridge with a very shocked expression on their faces.

"I presume you have this evidence here?" Madam Bones asked.

Goldridge smiled, showing his pointy teeth, and with a nod, had Griphook bring over the Auror Pensive, placing it on the table.

"I can attest to the contents of this pensive as being a true and accurate recording of the selection of the Potter secret-keeper, and of the evening of October 31, 1981. These memories were taken from Lord Potter in my presence, and a copy has been stored in this pensive since that time. Before allowing you to view these memories, however, I must have you each swear an oath that you will not disclose any secrets you may find out regarding Lord Potter. That is the only condition he has placed on viewing the contents of this pensive."

The three quickly gave their oath, and were permitted to enter the pensive to review the events of that day.

The first on out was Tiberius Ogden. He was looking pale and white as he came face to face with the image of Lord Voldemort. He took out a bottle of 'Ogden's finest Firewhiskey' from his robe and poured himself a large drink.

Much later, Madam Bones and Mad-eye Moody came out also looking pale and shaking. Mad-eye grabbed a glass and pushed it towards Tiberius as if asking for a drink. Tiberius looked up at Moody since he never drank from anything but his hip flask. "Shut up and just pour," was all Mad-eye said.

Madam Bones also accepted a glass of Ogden's finest gratefully saying, "Thank you Tiberius, and bless your great, great grandfather for coming up with such a fine beverage."

"Auror Moody, I have a special assignment for you when these proceedings are complete. You are to travel to Azkaban Prison and interview the prisoner Sirius Black. Take an auror pensive with you so that you can capture his memories of the items in question, that being; was he, or was he not the Potter's Secret Keeper. If he is not, does he know who the Secret Keeper was? And is he now, or has he ever been a Death-eater. If he answers these questions to your satisfaction, I am authorizing you to invoke the Theta protocol. We may not be permitted to take Mr. Black from Azkaban yet, but we should do everything we can to see that he is protected from the affects of the Dementors. Of course, no one outside of this room will know of this."

"Aye, I'll do that as quickly as I can."

Madam Bones then turned to Ragnok and Goldridge and said, "It is obvious that there were two different people's prospective of the attach in this pensive from slightly differing points of view. My main question is... How are the memories of Lily Potter clearly present here? We see her being killed right in front of us, but we also see the killing curse from her perspective. How is that possible?"

Ragnok smiles as simply states, "That is for Lord Potter to address, not us. But now maybe you can see why we asked for an oath before going into the pensive."

"Indeed. I must remember to keep an eye on this young Lord Potter. I have a niece about the same age as him; she should be starting Hogwarts in about three years. It would be well for her to keep an eye open as well on this young man."

"Oh Amelia, don't you think it's a bit early to start setting up Susan with a prospective boyfriend? They're only eight! Not eighteen!" Laughed Tiberius.

"Never you mind, by the looks of things Lord Potter would be a fine catch for any family. I was just thinking... Why not mine?" They all laughed at the moment of levity. However, things turned serious again as those who had just viewed the memories in the pensive thought about what they had just seen.

"Why didn't Lord Potter continue the memory to include how he was able to banish the Dark Lord all those years ago? Is there something he is hiding? How has he survived with those muggle relatives for so long? I remember meeting them several years ago after Death-eaters attacked a baby-shower that was being held at the Dursley's home just before Lord Potter was born. I must say, they were two of the most self-centered, repulsive individuals I have ever had the misfortune of meeting. If they treated a full-grown witch as poorly as they did me, then how would they have treated a magical infant? I shutter to think of the life he has had to lead these last seven years." This was as maternal as Madam Bones had ever felt. She didn't know why, but something about this young man drew her to him.

"We still have to determine who will be the new executor of the Will and Guardian for Harry." Tiberius said.

"If you will excuse me," Griphook said, "I believe the others may have come up with a viable solution for that." He then went on to explain the proposal Professor Flitwick had made to the others, and what their reaction had been. After he had finished his observations, he found Mad-eye looking at him very carefully.

"What? I was just standing close to them in case they needed any further refreshments. Is it my fault they didn't notice me?"

Moody just smiled, "You must be Ragnok's son."

"H... how did you know?" Griphook asked.

"Well, let's say the fruit doesn't fall to far from the tree with this one." Moody replied.

"Well my Lady, gentlemen, it is getting late and we still have to formally finish up some business before dismissing this Board. Shall we return to the Conference room?" Goldridge asked.

With Griphook holding the door open, the members of the Board of Inquiry reentered the Conference room.

Remus and the two professors had been so busy planning and visiting with each other, that they were not aware of the additional time the Board had taken reviewing the memories in the pensieve of the Potter's downfall almost seven years ago.

"Please excuse our tardiness. A matter of great importance came up that had to be dealt with immediately. Now, if you all please sit we have a few questions we wish to ask each of you."

Goldridge then asked each candidate in turn if they were aware of Professor Dumbledore's scheming, how they felt about Harry and how they felt they could be of the most help in raising him.

Remus and the others were excited to answer the questions that Goldridge had for them. In the end, it was just as they had wished. Professor Flitwick was appointed executor of the Will, and Professor McGonagall was appointed as his magical guardian. Remus was encouraged to stay as close as he could to Harry during the coming years, as he would need a 'father figure' to help raise him.

Professor Flitwick was about to fulfill his first act as the executor of the Potter's Will when Ragnok stopped him.

"I think it would be wise for us to call Lord Potter here so that he may witness what is about to take place. Sassy?"

Immediately Sassy appeared in the center of the Conference room facing the Board of Inquiry. This time she was dressed in a formal robe bearing the Potter seal on it. "My lords and ladys", she bowed, "How may I help you?"

Ragnok continued, "We were hoping Lord-Baron Potter would be available to talk to us before we conclude these proceedings. Could you please bring him here? We have come to a decision as to who will be the executor, and his guardian, and request his person so that he may be introduced to them."

Sassy bowed again and was gone. Within a minute, both Harry and Sassy returned. Everyone could tell that Harry had been crying, but decided not to bring it up at the time.

Goldridge welcomed Harry back, and introduced him to Professor Flitwick as the Executor, and Professor McGonagall as his guardian. For her part, Professor McGonagall came over and hugged Harry as if she really loved him, a tear escaping from the corner of her eye. Harry didn't know what to do since no one had ever physically given him a hug.

"Harry, I knew your parents the whole time they attended Hogwarts, and afterward when they were married before you were born. I have some wonderful stories that I could tell you about them as they were growing up." She smiled as she looked down at him. Harry also smiled, but the smile didn't quite reach his eyes. He was looking over at the other wizard who was in the room.

Professor McGonagall let him go and whispered in his ear, "I hope you'll forgive me Harry, but I will be spending a lot of time at school teaching. So I've made arrangements with Remus to look after you while I'm gone."

Since he had seen Remus, he had felt a close connection to him. He had memories of Remus when he came over and played with him while for hours. But did Remus remember him? After all he was just a little baby when Remus had last seen him. He wondered if Remus remembered him from Diagon Alley when he came out of Ollivander's so quickly that he and knocked him down?

Harry did want to get to know Remus. He had known his parents. He had played with him as a little baby, but did he want know Harry now? Would there be too many bad memories about his parents? What did the future hold for Harry and Remus? But Remus still stood there smiling at him like he just won the Lotto.

Harry looked over at her and saw a big smile on her face. It took him a few moments to realize what they were trying to do. Slowly, Harry walked over to Remus and extended his hand to shake Remus'. "Hello, Mr. Lupin, My name is Harry, Harry Potter."

Remus looked at Harry, then he looked at the hand that was extended, then he looked at Harry again, then stepped forward, scooped Harry up in his arms, and lifted him up in the air and hugged him as if his life depended on it.

"Oh Harry! I've been so worried about you! You look so much like James... But you have Lily's eyes!

Remus buried his head in the young boy's shoulder and cried.

Remus needed this cry to cleanse his trampled soul and allow it to heal.

"Oh Harry, you don't know how long I looked for you after Sirius was sent to Azkaban. Professor Dumbledore would only tell us that you were being well taken care of. And then when I saw you in Diagon Alley, I couldn't believe it! I called out for you, but when I got around the corner, you were gone." Getting a little more control over his emotions, he let Harry down and wiped his eyes.

"Sorry about that. I just never thought this day would really come about. I thought I would have to go through out the rest of my life bereft of friends and loved ones. I just feel so good right now. I didn't mean to make a scene."

"That's quite alright Remus. It's completely understandable after the life you've had to led because of you condition." Professor McGonagall said.

Remus panicked looked at Harry to see if he was aware of his problem. Harry just looked up at him smiled, and said, "I know about your little 'furry' problem once a month, and it doesn't bother me a bit. I just hope that some time soon I can learn how to change so I can keep you company too."

"We'll have no illegal animagus running around here young man." Professor McGonagall said in her best teacher's voice

Harry looked at Remus, smiled and said, "Then I guess we won't tell her about Mom, Dad, Sirius, and ..."

Harry stopped as he thought about Peter Pettigrew. He looked down, and started to feel the rage build up inside him. The others in the

room could also feel the added tension and power start to build up. Before it got too far along, Remus put his hand on Harry's shoulder and said, "We'll get him Harry. We'll get him and get Sirius out of Azkaban and make him pay for what he's done to you."

Harry looked up into the face of Remus and saw how important it was to him to find Peter. Peter was responsible for his parent's death; he was responsible for Sirius being in the wizard's prison. He would pay. It was just a matter of time. Harry settled back down, and lowered his head: "Sorry about that."

"Don't be Harry. I feel the same way."

"Tell me what?" Professor McGonagall asked.

Small Professor Flitwick cleared his throat and spoke to Harry and Remus. "As the newly appointed executor of your parent's Will, I wish to begin performing my duties by bequeathing to Remus that had been held from him for so many years."

Remus tried to refuse the money, but all Professor Flitwick did is read from the Will... 'This is not charity Moony. Think of it as payment for putting up with James for so long.' "They loved you Remus. Please let them do this for you and for Harry." Filius said.

Humbled by the thoughtfulness of his friends, and for Harry's sake, Remus accepted his portion of the Potter estate.

Goldridge stepped forward and handed a parchment containing the 'patent' and title for the land.

"This land has been held by the Potter's for over a thousand years. You are now the lord of the manor. Unfortunately, the manor was destroyed when the elder Lord and Lady Potter were killed. It is said that an exact model of the manor exists somewhere, and when this model is returned to the land, the manor will rise again, but this time as the Noble House of Lupin and you will be able to claim certain rights and privileges based on the old law governing landlords."

Harry looked excited at what Goldridge was saying. "Uncle Remus, I think I know where the model is! Could you come back with me to Privet Drive? I want to show you something."

Before Remus could respond, Professor Flitwick interrupted him. "I'm sorry to intrude at this point Harry, but there is something very important that I would like to do that is in opposition to your parent's will. We have figured that your parents must have switched Secret keepers before going into hiding. So with your consent, I would like to strike from the Will the bequest that was scheduled to go to Peter Pettigrew. If this is not done with your consent, and in the presence of other witnesses, should he ever show up, he would have legal claim on the money and the land."

Again with the mention of Peter's name the light in Harry's eyes started to shine brighter. "Please Professor Flitwick; you have my permission to strike that clause in the Will. Goldridge, since you were one of the original people to witness the Will, would you please initial the change to the document?"

Goldridge smiled a crooked smile, and answered, "Gladly."

"Sirius' portion of the estate will be held in trust until he is released from Azkaban." Professor Flitwick said, and with that made arrangements to meet with Harry back at Gringotts next Saturday to begin to review the family finances and to start his 'schooling' in business. He then excused himself, and returned to his home.

One by one the other members of the Board of Inquiry came up and congratulated Harry, Professor McGonagall, and Remus on their new situation.

As Madam Bones came up to Harry, she said, "I'm going to be keeping my eye on you young man. You show great potential. We shall expect great things from you."

"Thank you Madam Bones."

"To conclude this Board meeting, let me remind you that the proceedings here are not to be disclosed with any other individual. The new executor and guardian of Lord-Baron Harry James Potter is not to become common knowledge. Thank you for your time and service. May your gold always flow to you and may your enemies tremble in your presents. Each of you will be compensated for your time and service this day. This Board of Inquiry is now closed." Goldridge brought down a gavel to end the meeting.

"Okay Harry, where do you want to go to talk?" Remus asked.

"Why not come back to Privet Drive with Sassy and me?"

"Oh, I don't think you Uncle Vernon or Aunt Petunia would be too happy with having an adult witch and wizard show up at their house, besides, didn't you say that there were wards around the area that prevented us to apparate to the home?" Asked Professor McGonagall.

"I don't know about apparition, however... Sassy, can you please take Professor McGonagall to the cupboard, just outside of the trunk, I'll take Uncle Remus."

"Sure Harry," said Sassy.

Without warning, Harry and Sassy grabbed on to their arm, and before they knew what had happened, Remus and Minerva found themselves in a magically expanded cupboard under the stairs at Number Four Privet Drive. It was lit with only one dim 25-watt bulb.

"My word Harry! What did you just do? No one can apparate out of Gringotts!" Remus said in shock. For her part, Professor McGonagall has holding on to her chest as if she were expecting to have a heart attack.

"Like I told you Uncle Remus, I don't know how to apparate. That was called 'sliding'. It is how the house elves move around without making a sound."

"Well, it is much quicker and more comfortable then apparating," said Professor McGonagall. "Do you think you can show us how to do that?"

"That is not for me to say or to teach. The elf magic belongs to Sassy. It will be up to her to see if you learn how to 'slide'. But right now, I would like to take you into chamber five of the trunk my grandfather had built, but never used. Would you please come this way?"

Harry led his little group in to the fifth chamber of his grandfather's trunk.

"Remus, Professor McGonagall, welcome to Potter Manor."

Harry stood back so Remus and the Professor could get a good look at the manor and surrounding lands. Needless to say they were speechless. Their eyes were bugging out trying to look at everything, while their mouths were opening and closing like a goldfish in a fish bowl.

"Harry! This is fantastic!" Remus said still trying to look around at everything.

"Come on inside, I'll show you around."

Harry brought Remus and Professor McGonagall inside and gave them the grand tour of the home and grounds. After a light dinner fixed by Sassy, Harry gave them a tour of the rest of the trunk chambers, and made a suggestion that when they go to rebuild the Manor for Remus, an addition room be added either on the ground floor, or in the basement for each of the chambers in the trunk.

As they were talking about rebuilding the manor, Harry had an idea. "Sassy, are there any other house elves that are bound to the house of Potter?"

"Of course Harry, I have been visiting with them all, telling them that they have a new master, and generally what a great guy you are."

Harry heard Remus snicker, while Professor McGonagall gasped at the type of language Sassy was using in Harry's presence. Harry looked at both of the adults in the room and got just a little upset. "I'll tell you what I told Mr. Ogden before the Board meeting today. Sassy is my friend and a fellow magical being and will be treated fairly, equitable and with respect, like any other magical being."

Remus held up his hands in surrender saying, "Lily tried for years to get the house elves to act like that, and you've done it in just a few weeks."

"Yes Harry, it is refreshing to see a wizard actually treat another magical being as an equal," was Professor McGonagall response. Then looking at Sassy, said, "I hope in time I can be your friend also."

Sassy blushed, and curtsied to Professor McGonagall and said, "That is my wish as well." Then looking at Remus, she said, "You too Moony."

Remus laughed being called by his old Marauder name. When Professor McGonagall looked at Harry, he quickly said "I'll explain later."

"Master Harry," Sassy started. Harry quickly looked at her. She knew he hated to be called 'Master' so she thought she would explain things better. "With more than just the Master of the House present, I should show you a bit more respect so that we don't have the same problem as we did with Mr. Ogden."

"I think I understand what you are saying Sassy, but remember, these people here are now part of my family... or I am part of theirs... whatever... just treat them like you would like to be treated."

"Alright Harry. Harry, before we call the other house elves here, I think we should go to chamber seven or nine where we will have a little breathing room."

"Okay, let's go!"

End Chapter 13

Next Chapter – Meeting the House Elves.

Essences of Lily – Chapter 14 – Meeting the House Elves

Repost:

Harry led Professor McGonagall and Remus to chamber seven that opened into a large wooded spaces with just a nip of fall in the air.

"Harry," Remus said, "If you could ward the portals so that nothing could get in or out of here, this would be a perfect place for my monthly ... 'problem'."

"I'm glad you said that, because this is one of two rooms that could be used for that."

"What do I do to call all of the house elves here Sassy?" Harry asked.

"Just concentrate on wanting all the elves belonging to the House of Potter to attend a 'General Meeting' and they will come to your call."

Harry starts to think about all the house elves that belong to the House of Potter over and over in his mind, but somewhere along the way, he started thinking 'All house elves that want to belong to the House of Potter – I, Harry James Potter Head of the House of Potter call a general meeting'.

There was a tremendous rushing sound as hundreds if not thousands of house elves appeared suddenly in the open spaces. "Oh my word, do all of you work for the House of Potter?" Harry asked.

"Not all sirs, some of us is being free elves who is looking for a noble house to be bound to." Answered one of the older elves dressed only in a dirty hand towel. "We's is being thrown out of others homes because our old masters wanted us to do what isn't right. Mostly, if we's disobey our masters they just kill us outright, but some of us was smart enough to get cloths to become free before they could kill us, so we's escaped! Word had spread from the other elves that the House of Potter has a new Head and that he is a kind and great wizard. We's is wanting to be working for you if you will have us."

Harry, Remus and Professor McGonagall were in shock at the sheer number of 'free' house elves there were and that they all wanted to be part of the House of Potter.

"Hum, could you give me a minute to talk and think about this. I'm sure we'll be able to come up with something. In the meantime, could all of the current house elves of the House of Potter please come forward?" About a hundred fifty house elves came forward and formed a little circle around Harry and his group.

"Thank you all for coming. I didn't mean to mess things up though." Harry started out, "Do you have a leader among you?"

An elderly house elf came forward and bowed, "My name be Mika. I is the eldest house elf of the Potter clan. I is remembering when Harold Potter is be needing his nappy changed. That makes me very old indeed." Harry and his group smiled at Mika and the little joke she told, motioning for her to continue she went on. "Each home, manor, or property of the Potters is needing house elves. At each place there is an overseer who is being responsible for the work and repair of the property. A group of overseer will form a committee to be seeing if all of the work is being done right, or if more worker is being needed. If some places have too many workers and other places is not having enough workers, then they is being transferred to where the job is needing to be done. All of this has to approved by the Master or Mistress of the house. We is not wanting to split up families of elves, but this is giving the younger elves a chance to see other places and be meeting other elves, and maybe becoming a pair, and starting a family. Does this help Master Harry understand his house elves?"

"Yes, very much, thank you Mika. Mika, can you tell me if all of the Potter properties have enough house elves to take care of the work? By that I mean, enough to keep the homes and manors clean and running properly? Taking care of the animals and grounds?"

Mika lowered her head and ears, and said quietly, "No Master Harry, there be not enough house elves and there be not enough money. Since Master Harold passed away, there is not being a head of the Potter house to allow the house elves to be getting any money from Gringotts. There be many places of the Potters that have not been visited by a family member for many years. No Head of House has asked about all of the Potter properties for many years." Then Mika

reached up and started to pull and twist her ears in a most painful manner.

"MIKA, STOP THAT THIS INSTANT!" Said Harry with a great deal of authority. "Why did you start hurting yourself? It's not your fault some properties have been kept up. I am not holding you responsible for that. You will not hurt yourself for something that is not your fault." Harry raised his voice so that all the elves could hear, "From this time forth, no elf is to cause intentional injury to themselves is that understood? No ear pulling, head banging, finger smashing, wall hitting, or anything else. If there is something wrong, we will fix it. If discipline is needed, you will come to me. You will not punish yourselves just for failing in a task. And by the same token, you are not to allow any other person to hurt you. Do you understand?"

"Yes Master." All the elves said.

"And another thing. I'm Harry. I may happen to be your master, but I would also like to be your friend. In informal settings, please call me Harry okay? One more thing, this is Professor Minerva McGonagall and Remus Lupin. They are my guardians. You will follow their direction as you would follow mine."

"Mika, do you think you could use all these free house elves to help get all the Potter properties cleaned up and livable?"

"Well, most of them Master Harry, it is being a very large task, and most house elves be working very hard."

'Harry, aren't you forgetting something? You are not only the Head of one House, but also two permanently, and if you include the Black's that would be three. But if the Potter estates have fallen into disrepair after just a few generations, think how the Ravenclaw estates must be. Why don't you call a general meeting for the Ravenclaw house elves also? Maybe between the two Houses, you will find a home for all of the house elves?' Ma suggested.

'That's a great idea 'Ma' thanks!'

Harry turned to his guardians and said, "I need you to swear an oath on your magic and your life that you will not reveal any of my secrets."

"Now Harry, that's a little bit serious don't you think? What could an eight-year-old boy have or know that would require that serious of an oath?"

"I require the oath or I cannot reveal my secrets." There was a level of serious that neither Remus nor Minerva had seen in any person. Not even Dumbledore.

After a few moments, both gave their oath to Harry. He then turned and addressed all the elves in the chamber, "Do you swear, that even if you do not join my House, you will always keep my secrets?"

In one voice all of the elves answered 'Yes!' and the magic flared sealing the magical oath.

Harry then centered his mind on any house elves who belonged to the House of Ravenclaw and cried out. 'All house elves that belong to the House of Ravenclaw – I, Harry James Potter Head of the House of Ravenclaw call a general meeting'

Harry was surprised when it seemed nothing happened. 'Well, I guess all of the house elves have passed away. We may never find any of the Ravenclaw estates' He thought.

Slowly, a bright light started gathering in front of Harry. All of the other house elves divided into two groups, as if dividing a great sea. Remus and Professor McGonagall both had their wand out and at the ready.

"I really do not think that will be necessary." Came a calm voice from the portal and with a subtle flash, Remus and Minerva found that their wands had been returned to their wand holders.

Out of the portal stepped the oldest house elf anyone had ever seen. He was neatly dressed with brown pants, simple white shirt and a gold tunic. He had a very proud bearing about him. He leaned very heavily on a full-size staff of whitest ivory with gold thread interlaced around its full length. In his other arm, he carried a large leather bound tome with gold gilded edges. On the cover was clearly the crest of the House of Ravenclaw. As he made his way towards Harry, the portal slowly closed on its self.

Everyone in the chamber was in awe of the house elf before them. The other house elves in the chamber instinctively went to their knees before the ancient elf. As he came in front of Harry, he stopped, and bowing deeply said, "It is with great pleasure I present myself to the new heir, and Head of the House of Ravenclaw."

Harry was in shock. He could feel the power, love and wisdom radiating off of this old elf. "I welcome you here noble elf. How should I address you?"

"It has been so many years I do not remember my name. But you may call me 'Raven'." The elderly elf stated.

"Welcome noble Raven. I am Harry James Potter, Lord of the Houses of Ravenclaw and Lord of the House of Potter."

Professor McGonagall gasped, and Remus' knees almost buckled underneath him at this news.

"I bid thee welcome young Master. I pray, please allow me to complete my task so that I can be on to the next great adventure." Receiving a nod from Harry, Raven continued, "For nearly nine hundred years, I have been charged with the duty of bestowing two items upon the next Head of Ravenclaw. The first is the staff of Ravenclaw. It holds the key to the Coronet of Ravenclaw, better known as the Coronet of power and knowledge; for it will bestow on its worthy heir the knowledge and power of the founders."

"The next item is the Journal of Ravenclaw." Here the old elf motioned to the bound tome in his arm. "It contains key information concerning the founders, Hogwarts, and the prophecies recorded by Lady Ravenclaw herself. It can only be read and understood by those who shall prove themselves worth." With this the old elf handed the items over to Harry. He was amazed at the power he could feel from both the staff and the book."

"Thank you noble Raven, you have proven yourself faithful in the extreme, and have preformed your task exceptionally well." Harry said as he bowed to Raven while he held the articles of Ravenclaw.

"Lord Ravenclaw, as I have completed my commission, I pray that thou wouldst release me from the house of Ravenclaw that I may go to the next great adventure as a free elf."

The other elves gasped that such an old and noble elf would want to be freed.

Harry look at Raven for a few moments before doing anything. He didn't fully understand why Raven would be making this request of him, or in fact, how a person went about releasing a House elf. He had just heard some of the 'free' elves state how they had been released by receiving 'clothes', but what did that all imply?

Deciding to use this as a learning experience, Harry handed the Ravenclaw tome to Remus, and taking the staff of Ravenclaw in one hand, placed his other hand on Raven's shoulder and turning to face the elves. Harry looked again into the face of the ancient elf, searching for some clue as to what would motivate this house elf to take this action.

Speaking to Raven, but loud enough for all the elves to hear, Harry asked the ancient elf, "Raven, why would you ask this of me? You have been a most faithful elf, and have completed your mission with honor. Why do you now wish to be free?"

Raven looked up at Harry with a kind and gracious smile. He knew Harry was asking because he really wanted to know, but also Harry wanted to use this as a training example to all the house elves that would choose to bind with him this day, or in the future.

Raven took a few moments to compose his thoughts, and then, looking back up at Harry, and speaking loud enough so all could hear him he replied.

"My lord, for low these eight hundred four score and eight years, I have been privileged to serve one of the most ancient and noble houses in the wizarding world."

"While I was in my mistress' presence, she showed me what kindness and loyalty that can be found within the human heart; the wisdom that can come from a well developed mind; and the peace that can come from a spirit free of offense before my Maker and man. She showed me the joy that can be had when right prevails

over wrong, and the misery that is to be had when the people are oppressed by evil men."

"But most of all, she showed me the importance of duty and responsibility. Duty to myself, duty to my mistress, duty to my people, duty to my house, and duty to my Maker."

"I have completed my mission here in this realm of existence and I am looking forward to moving on to the next great adventure. It has been many years since I have had anyone with whom I could talk. I am looking forward to the time when I can meet my mistress again, and as a free elf, pledge to her a new my life, and service as a friend and grateful servant of my own free will and choice."

Harry and the others in the chamber, both elf and wizard, took a few minutes to think about what the ancient elf had said.

Harry remembered the one elf talk about giving the elf cloths to make them free. He looked around trying to find some article of cloth that he could give. Finding none, Harry sat down on the floor, put the staff down, and proceeded to take his shoes off. After that he took on one of the socks, and standing, handed it to the ancient elf. The old elf held the sock reverently and bowed to Harry.

"Thank you Lord Ravenclaw. These many centuries I have prayed for release, yet I knew I had a task to complete and would not be turned from it. You have allowed me to fulfill my mission with honor. I am now ready for the next adventure, to see my loved ones once again. I leave my thanks and blessing on you and your friends Lord Ravenclaw. May you be successful in your fight against evil."

With that, the old elf simply faded from before everyone's eyes.

There was complete silence in the chamber for several minutes as each person and elf reviewed what he or she had just witnessed. There was no doubt in anyone's mind this was a great house elf.

Harry finally said "I would like this spot of ground set aside as a memorial to the great elf Raven."

Sassy stepped forward and with a few waves of her hands, a white fence was erected around the ground that Raven had walked. In the spot where he vanished from, a marker was at the place he

vanished from. It said: "This spot is where the great and noble house elf Raven departed this world for the next great adventure."

"Thank you Sassy."

Harry spoke to all the house elves present in the chamber.

"You have just seen the degree of dedication and loyalty the house elves of old had. Can you be as loyal and dedicated as Raven? Could I be a Master worthy enough to deserve that type of loyalty? I will try to be. I pledge to treat each of you kindly and fairly. In return, I expect you to do your best. That is all that can be asked."

"Now we have the properties of two Houses to take care of. Before you decide if you want to be my house elves, I will expect each of you to come forth to this monument, and think about what you have seen and heard this day. Then if you feel you can live up to the example you have seen here tonight, I will be willing to accept you as a member of one of my house. I will expect you act the part of a member of a noble house. You will wear uniforms suited to your station and task. I will have material provided that you may create your own uniforms. The uniforms will include the noble house you are serving, be it Potter or Ravenclaw. You will take care of yourselves. You will not injure yourself, or allow any injury to come upon you. If there are problems, I want to know what they are so that I can help solve them. And I want to get to know each of you – but that may take time."

"If there are any who cannot live up to these standards, you may leave now, but remember, you are under oath not to reveal what you have seen or heard today." Harry waited for a few seconds to see if anyone would leave. When it appeared that no one was going to leave, he asked, "What do I do now? How does a house elf join a new family, or a new house?"

Professor McGonagall said, "Just search your heart and you will know. I don't think anyone has ever been bound to a thousand house elves at once before."

After a moment, Harry remembered what he had seen on an American police show on the Tele one time when the judge swore in a witness.

"All of you raise your right hand." Harry waited while the elves figured out what was their right hand.

"Do you, and each of you, solemnly swear to uphold the standards of the Houses of Potter and Ravenclaw to the best of your ability, and keep all your masters secrets?"

In one voice the house elves said "YES".

There was a tremendous thunderclap and a brilliant flash of light as the magic of all the house elves, and Harry's own magic combined to seal the oath.

Minerva and Remus were shocked that the boy was still standing after binding with over a thousand house elves. The house elves for their part looked invigorated and renewed after the binding. Many started to clean themselves up, feeling a new sense of pride and purpose.

Harry turned to Mika and said, "Mika, I would like you to get with the other overseers and come up with a list of ALL of the Potter and Ravenclaw properties and what you think it would take to get them livable again. Then you and the overseers are to evaluate the former free elves to see what their skills are. Sassy, Will you please go back to Diagon Alley to get enough food and cloth to make uniforms for all the elves. Remember you have two houses to buy for now. Take some others to help you if you need."

"You other house elves, as soon as Sassy gets back with the material, I want you making uniforms for yourselves, at least three house uniforms for each house, and two work uniforms for each house. If some of you have special skills, such as healers, and such, please let Mika know. Professor McGonagall, Mr. Lupin, and I have to step out for a few minutes, but we will return soon."

With that, Harry motioned for them to follow him to the chamber five and the manor.

Harry groaned as he fell into the first couch he found in the manor. "Never let me try something like that again! I can hardly hold my arms up after binding with so many house elves!"

"In other words, you had to come in here to save face with the house elves, right?" Remus asked.

"Of course Uncle Remus, what would your opinion of your new master be if he fainted right after a simple binding ceremony?"

"I would hardly call that a simple binding ceremony Harry. I don't think anyone in the WORLD would have been able to remain standing after something like that... Dumbledore included." Professor McGonagall added.

"Thanks... What am I going to call you Professor? I mean I don't mind calling your Professor McGonagall, but after a while, I bet even you get tired of hearing that."

"Well I was thinking that while we are in private, or any of your properties, you can call me Aunt Min. However, in public, like at Diagon Alley, please refer to me as Professor McGonagall. After all, I do have an image to maintain."

"And such a fine image it is." Said Harry without thinking.

Minerva blushed, but tried to look stern.

"Oh no! We have another James Potter on our hands!" Said Remus laughing. "He used to say that to Minerva when ever he got in trouble."

Harry smiled at first, and then frowned. "I wish I knew what my father was like." He said sadly.

"I'm sorry Harry; I didn't mean to cause you to feel bad. I promise I will tell you all kinds of stories about James and Lily when we get things settled in."

"That would be great Uncle Remus, thanks."

After Harry had rested for a few minutes, he suddenly sat straight up on the couch.

"What's the matter Harry?" Minerva asked.

"I have just been notified by one of the wards that I put up around Privet Drive that a very powerful wizard is coming to the front door. On a scale of one to ten, he's about a nine. That means it could only be one of two people, and frankly, I don't think Voldemort could have made it back from the world of spirits yet. You two please stay here. I don't want him to know you're here, or that we have a way of getting you through his wards. I also don't want him knowing about the results of the Board of Inquiry and who my new guardians are. I'll be back in just a few minutes."

Harry quickly cleaned up, changed cloths, and came out of his cupboard under the stairs, just in time to hear Uncle Vernon start in on a tirade of having to have another 'freak' in his house.

"I assure you Mr. Dursley, you will be most pleased by the time I leave here today. Could you please call your lovely wife and son to come in also. Ah, Harry, it is good to see you again. Thank you for being strong enough to stand up to me and show me the failures I have made along the way. I assure you, I have many, many things to rectify and it will take some time. But I intend to see it through to the end."

Petunia and Dudley Dursley had come in on the middle of Professor Dumbledore's speech. Both were mystified how this little runt of an eight-year-old boy could have a full-grown adult apologizing to him this way. But what shocked them even more was Harry's reaction to him.

"Professor, do not come here trying to show me how kind and benevolent you are. You have done more damage to the wizarding world the Voldemort could even think of. You have taken away the opportunity and right of the children to grow up strong by binding their power. You have taken that which is not yours from three of the four founder families, and while I am glad in the case of Salazar Slytherin's heir, the other two families have suffered greatly."

"Do not come here to 'show' how great and good you are. Do not come here to ask forgiveness for taking something that never belonged to you. What you will do is, as soon as you are through with your 'business' here today, you will depart from this place with a vow never to interfere with the Dursley's again."

Harry was standing straight and tall, while Professor seemed to be getting smaller and smaller the longer he talked. You could feel the power coming of from Harry and you could feel the truthfulness in his words.

Looking properly chastened, Professor Dumbledore began again looking at all of the Dursley's, but especially Petunia.

"Yes, Harry is right. I have done a great harm against you. I 'forced' you to take Harry against his parents wishes, and I withheld the stipend that was to have gone to the family that raised him." Here Professor Dumbledore took a small valise out of his pocket and placed it on the table. As soon as the valise touched the table, it expanded to normal size. All of the Dursley's jumped back as if something was going to attack them. When nothing did, they sat back down and looked again at the valise.

Professor Dumbledore opened the valise and turned it around so that the Dursley's could see the content. When they did, both Vernon and Petunia gasped, and Petunia quickly fainted. After Professor Dumbledore revived Petunia, he explained. "According to the terms of James and Lily's Will, the person or family raising Harry was to receive a stipend currently valued at two thousand galleons per month. At a conversion ratio of one to five, that is equal to ten thousand pounds Sterling each month. There is approximately 800,000 pounds in this case. It was meant to be your, it now is yours. As long as Harry stays here, your will receive ten thousand pounds per month adjusted yearly."

The Dursley's were stunted by this revelation. TEN THOUSAND POUNDS PER MONTH just for looking after the brat. Well, they felt that they deserved every pence on it. They were already thinking of all the things they could do with that kind of money! It didn't mean that Harry would get out of the cupboard anytime soon, but... TEN THOUSAND POUNDS PER MONTH! They could hardly believe their ears.

They were brought out of their daydream with the Headmaster clearing his throat.

"As Harry has requested, I, Albus Dumbledore pledge upon my life and upon my magic, not to adversely interfere with the Dursleys

again. So mote it be." There was a brief flair of magic to signify the acceptance of the oath.

"Well, I have overstayed my welcome here; I must be on my way. Please forgive me for what I have done, and take good care of Harry. Please."

With that Professor Dumbledore got up and saw himself to the door. Looking back at Harry, he said, "I am sorry Harry, I will try to prove it to you and maybe someday I can receive your trust and forgiveness." Then he turned and walked out the door.

Harry went back into the front room where his 'family' was. He found them looking through the money and counting it to make sure it was all there. He thought this might be the best time to break the news to them about his new guardians.

"I wouldn't get too use to the idea of this kind of money coming in every month for much longer now." Harry said.

"What? What are you talking about boy? Didn't you hear the man? Whoever is raising you gets TEN THOUSAND POUNDS PER MONTH!" You could see the greed in Uncle Vernon's eyes. "And we plan on raising your for a very, very long time!"

"That's not going to happen Uncle Vernon."

"IT'S NOT? WHY NOT YOU NO GOOD FOR NOTHING BRAT?" Uncle Vernon was starting into one of his tirades again. He stood up and was coming over to Harry in a very threatening manner and his face turned a deep purple and the vein at the side of his neck looked like it was going to escape and leave his body.

Harry simply raised his arm, and the Sword Durendal appeared. Vernon stopped dead in his tracks when he saw the blade, and started to back away.

"What ya going to do now boy? You going to kill us all and take the money for yourself? You won't get away with it ya know, you have nowhere to run and nowhere to go. You'll be caught within a week!" Vernon was talking brave, but he was scared out of his wits.

"Oh, sit down and shut up Uncle Vernon!" Harry said. With a wave of his hand Durendal was gone.

"I'm not going to kill you... unless you force me to."

"The reason I'm saying don't get too use to the money, is because new guardians have been appointed over me. It's like Professor Dumbledore said. I was never to have gone here. I was only to meet you once after my eleventh birthday."

"The only reason why Professor Dumbledore is giving you this money now is because it was to have been yours in the first place. Nothing more, nothing less. I will be leaving here as soon as the old Potter Manor is rebuilt in Wales."

"Rebuild a Manor! That could take years to complete!" Petunia said.

"No Aunt Petunia, I have an army of about a thousand house elves that will be doing the rebuilding, it will probable take weeks or on the outside months to complete. But there is one thing I want to know before I go."

Harry decided that he would try to find the reason behind Uncle Vernon's anger towards him.

"Uncle Vernon," Harry asked softly. "Why are you so mad and angry at me? What have I done to you to make you hate me so? If I know what I've done, maybe I can change my actions." He had played his opening cards.

"What have you done? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE! YOU EXIST! Because of you and your kind my mother and father are dead! Can you undo that oh high and mighty mister wizard? NO YOU CAN NOT!"

"The world was deprived a great man when those 'Death-watcher' or whatever they are called came here and just started killing people. YOUR mother takes it upon herself to throw ME in to a cupboard and prevents me from going out and protecting my Petunia and my parents... Then YOUR father grabs my Petunia, and pull her back to start fighting those Death-thingys and he had the nerve to tell her that SHE owes HIM a life-debt? Do you know that's why you're here? Because my parents were killed by your type?"

Harry was quite shocked. Uncle Vernon had actually stated the reason for his loathing of Harry. As hard as it was to hear, at least now he knew why.

"I didn't know Uncle Vernon, I am sorry for your lose. I know it may sound hollow right now, but I am sorry. I would have liked to have had the opportunity to have met them."

"Huh, spare me your pity boy. My parents would have never liked you. You were just a freak to them, someone who's not even all HUMAN. If I had my way, you'd all be hunted down and disposed of"!

"You mean ... Killed?" Harry asked coldly.

"Ya... Killed." Vernon had a sick smile on his face.

"That's interesting," Harry started, "You see, the person who sent those 'Death-eaters' here has the same goal. He wants to see anyone who isn't a pure blooded wizard ... killed, also. The only difference in your list of people to kill, is on one side you say 'magical', and on the other side you say 'non-pure blood'. Between the two of you there would be a total annihilation of everyone on earth! Well, don't worry I won't be here for much longer, and then you can spend your money any way you want." With that, Harry turned around and went back into his cupboard under the stairs.

Headmaster's Office at Hogwarts

Professor Dumbledore was sitting behind his desk with his fingers steepled in front of him. He had just returned from the Dursley's and another encounter with Harry Potter. He had gone there to help ease his mind by paying the stipends he had taken from them over the last seven years. It really didn't matter now; the money he had received over those years had allowed him to invest in successful businesses that now would generate a steady stream of income that he could live off of for the rest of his life.

What surprised him though was that Harry knew about the core binding in the new-born's that was over a power rating of forty or above, and also what he had done to the other heirs of the founders.

Where had young Harry heard these things? He thought he had covered his tracks to the point that no one knew he had done this.

Harry also apparently knew about him taking heir's of the founders key possessions, but did he know why? Did Harry know that all he needed was Ravenclaw's Coronet and he (Dumbledore) could claim ownership of Hogwarts? No more answering to the School Board and their petty pure-blood request. No more answering to the Ministry of Magic and their corrupt administrators. For the first time in many years Dumbledore ask himself if he was still the only one who knew what was right for the wizarding community. What was it that Harry had said at the Board of Inquiry, 'You do believe in your heart that you are doing the right thing. But be warned; your time is passed. A new generation will rise to take care of the current plague. So says Durendal of Roland.'

Could it be true? Could his time really be passed as far as leading the light side of the wizarding world? Did Harry really possess the sword Durendal of Prince Roland? If he did, that would make it more difficult to control Harry in the future... Wait, why was he still having these thoughts of controlling people and of gaining power? Had he really gone that far from the light side that he would be found unworthy by the blessed sword of Prince Roland?

Professor Dumbledore knew there were many, many more of his actions that he would have to review in his pensive to see just where he went wrong, and how far away was he from the side of light.

Privet Drive – the cupboard under the stairs

Harry was quite upset. He had just had another meeting with Dumbledore in front of the Dursley's. WHAT WAS THAT HE THINKING? THAT HE COULD JUST WALK IN HERE AND BUY HIS FORGIVENESS BY GIVING THE DURSLEY'S THE MONEY THAT WAS DUE THEM FROM THE BEGINNING?

At least Harry had gotten the old fool to give a magically binding oath that he would leave the Dursley's alone from now on.

Returning back to chamber five and the Potter Manor, Harry was brought out of his mood when he saw Remus and Professor McGonagall talking together in the kitchen over tea.

"What did the Headmaster want Harry?" Professor McGonagall asked in a sincere voice.

"It appears that Professor Dumbledore is trying to right some of the wrongs he has committed in the past. He brought the stipends the Dursley's should have been receiving for the last seven years and gave it to them all at once. You should have seen the greedy look on Uncle Vernon's face when he saw that briefcase open up with almost 800,000 pounds in it! You could just see his little greedy mind trying to figure out ways to get more money out of me."

"Imagine his surprise when I told him that I wouldn't be staying here that much longer. I plan on moving out with you, Uncle Remus, as soon as we can get the Manor rebuilt. I hope I'm not making too much of an assumption?" Harry added as an after thought.

"Not at all Harry," Remus said, "I'd love to have you come and live with me as soon as I have a suitable place to live. That is, if it's alright with your legal guardian?"

Professor McGonagall smiled. This was exactly what she wanted. She knew that on paper, she was Harry's guardian. But it would be in fact, Remus that would raise and teach Harry. She had always had a soft spot in her heart for Remus. She had known about his 'problem' during his days at Hogwarts, and was pleased when James, Sirius, and Peter had befriended him.

Remus had always been the level-headed one in that group. And it pleased her to no end to see him so happy now that he was close to Harry.

"No Remus, I don't have any problem with you keeping Harry at your home once it gets settled. It will make it much easier for me in fact. I have been at Hogwarts for so long, that my little cottage would need major updating if I were to bring Harry back there. I doubt very much that he would want to spend all of his time at Hogwarts with Professor Dumbledore and myself." She stated lovingly.

"No offense Aunt Min, but I think you're right. It's going to take a lot for me to be ready to deal with Professor Dumbledore when I get to Hogwarts in three years. I don't know how I would handle being with him daily, especially right now." Harry replied.

"Alright, it's decided, Harry will move in with me as soon as I have a suitable place to live." Remus announced.

"Great!" said Harry, "And in the mean time..." Harry looked at Remus with pleading in his eyes, "Could I talk you into staying here in Potter Manor in chamber five? I really would like to get to know you better, and to hear some of those stories you have about my parents."

"Sure Harry, that's the least I could do for you." Remus said with a tear in his eye.

A small old ship sits in its slip of an old run-down marina in northern Scotland. The fog seems so thick and cold you aren't sure of the time of day or season of the year.

'Mad-eye' Moody appears to walk out of the fog, heading toward the ship. As he gets closer, an old man can be seen in the aft part of the ship. "Do ye seek passage over the river Styx to Hades and your final rest?"

"Nay Charon, I seek passage to Azkaban," as he handed him a Knut.

'Man, I'll never make it rich on this route.' Charon thought to himself.

The ship started sailing as soon as Mad-eye was on board. For the next several hours there is nothing to see or do as the fog continues to envelop the ship on rough seas.

Finally, the shores of Azkaban could be seen, and the old ship silently pulled into port.

"Thank ye greatly Charon, I'll be back in a few hours." Mad-eye said as he exited the ship.

Walking up to the fortress prison on Azkaban, Mad-eye began to feel the effects of the Dementors. 'They must be feeding now. I hope Sirius is still in his right mind.'

Finding the warden of the facility, Mad-eye presented him with a set of orders.

"By order of Madam Bones, Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, I am placing the prisoner Sirius Orion Black under the Theta Protocol, and instruct all human contact with him to cease and de cease as soon as the prisoner has been informed of this development. House elves are to see to his needs, and at the appropriate time, he will be returned to the mainland to face final judgment of his case and crimes." Mad-eye read from the declaration.

To say the warden was shocked would be putting it lightly. The Theta Protocol was only used on those inmates that were marked for death.

The archaic way of writing the Theta symbol was a circle with a cross or 'X' through it. It was said to be the 'inspiration' for the 'skull and crossbones' used by the pirates.

"You will take me to the prisoner now, and leave me there while the Theta Protocol is activated around him." Mad-eye stated coldly.

The warden for his part knew enough not to question Auror Moody if he was here on assignment.

"Ye... Yes Auror Moody. Please, follow me." He said, as he picked up his wand and started out of his office.

Down the corridors they went, deeper and deeper into the bowels of the fortress, closer to the 'home' of the Dementors.

It was not too surprising that Sirius' cell would be the closes one to the Dementors quarters. Here, you felt like saying 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here' – this was surly what Hell would be like. The warden was having a hard time keeping the Dementors effects at bay. He almost stopped functioning at all.

"Don't ya know how to do a Patronus man, or how to shield your mind?" Mad-eye asked. In a flash, he whipped out his wand, and shouted "Expecto Patronum!" A small cat, looking quite a bit like Professor McGonagall's animagus form, shot out of Mad-eye's wand, and lit in the hallway next to the door. Almost immediately the hallway felt warmer, and the effect of the Dementors was greatly diminished.

The warden regained his wits about him, and opened Sirius' cell door. Looking in the cell, he could see Sirius curled up in a ball in the far corner. "Are ya sure you'll be alright with this one Alastor? I hear he's as loony as they come."

"I won't have any problems with prisoner Black, Jake, besides, where would he run to? Now remember, after you close this door, no other person is to have any contact with this man is that understood?"

"Yes sir, perfectly sir! How long should I leave you in there with him?"

"Never you mind. I'll be able to get back out and put the seal on the door. I should be visiting you again in your office when I am finished."

The warden took the hint that he was being dismissed, and closed the door behind Mad-eye after he entered Sirius' cell. Quickly Mad-eye put up several locking and privacy charms on the door and around the room.

"I must thank you Alastor; I haven't felt the effects of a fully formed patronus for many years. Do you think I'll ever have the opportunity to tell Min she's your patronus?" Sirius whispered as he slowly straightened out from the fetal position he was in.

"Aye, ya just might at that." Mad-eye answered. He laughed to himself as he saw the shocked look on Sirius' face. Getting serious, Mad-eye said: "Prisoner Sirius Orion Black, by order of the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement, I hereby place you under Protocol Theta." There was a flash of magic, and all at once, the cell Sirius had spent the last seven years of his life became bright, and clean. It looked more like a single room apartment than a cell in the bowels of the most feared prison on earth.

"Wha..." was all Sirius could say. He slowly stood up and looked around his former cell. "Is this the some kind of cruel joke? Let a man start to dream of a better life before you take it all away just to break him? Come on Alastor, out with it! Remember I was an Auror too; I know what the Theta Protocol means – death penalty! So are you here to kill me then? Just let me tell you this; I was not James and Lily's secret keeper! I am not now nor have I ever been a Death-

eater! You may kill me now, but I have unfinished business here in this world; I will see that Harry James Potter is taken care of and loved and treated as best a ghost a Godfather can do! This I swear on my magic!

There was a surprisingly bright flare of magic sealing the oath of Sirius Black. His eyes wet with tears of remorse for not having been there for young Harry. For the pain he felt for having let his dearest and best friends down by being too impatient and chasing after Peter and not taking care of Harry, as he should.

He should have never let Hagrid take Harry from him!

Standing as straight as he could Sirius turned and faced Mad-eye full on. "One more thing Moody, if you ever see a rat missing a finger on its paw – kill it! And I can leave this world in peace."

Sirius stood proud and tall. He looked Mad-eye in the eye (the good eye), and waited.

Mad-eye for his part just stood there and listened with a crooked smile on his face. This was a good sign! Sirius wasn't out of his mind! He was still a strong (emaciated) man with a good soul and spirit.

"Ya are so willing ta die right now, but are ya willing ta live?" Moody asked.

Sirius looked at Moody with a question on his face. He didn't understand what was going on. Why didn't Alastor just finish him off?

"What? You want me to fight you? If I thought it would get me out of here and back to Harry I would do it in a minute! But you're just getting your jollies by teasing me now. If you're going to kill me, then kill me Moody and be done with it!"

"Ya always were an impatient pup ya know that Black. I'm not here to kill ya, or tease ya. I'm here to save ya."

"What? Am I going to be walking out that door anytime soon? How are you going to save me?" Sirius was still mad and upset. And right now, he was also getting confused.

"No, ya ain't going to be walking out that door just yet. But it has been brought to the attention of Madam Bones and a few of the powers that be that ya ain't guilty of betraying the Potters or of being a Death-eater."

"Ya only heard what you wanted to hear when I mentioned the Theta Protocol. Now, if I had been invoking the protocol under the direction of the Minister of Magic or the Wizengamot, then yes, ya would be under the sentence of Death. But the DMLE has a separate protocol Theta. It refers to the 'soul' of the individual."

"The Director and me both know you're innocent Black, but until we can bring proof to the Wizengamot, our hands are basically tied, but what we can do is make your place someplace where you can start restoring your 'soul' and body until we get ya out. And we will get ya out. Either that, or your godson Harry is going ta come out here and take this place down stone by stone until he finds ya."

Now Sirius was really confused. What did Harry have to do with this? He was only eight years old. What was Moody talking about? He started feeling dizzy and had to sit down. Moody conjured a table and chair for Sirius. Sirius stumbled over to and sat down. He looked up at Mad-eye with a questioned look on his face. He didn't have the strength to ask the questions running through his mind though.

Mad-eye took pity on him as he gave out a little laugh and walked over to where Sirius was now sitting. "Let's start out with some of these." He said as he produced several vials of potions from under his robe. There were pepper-up potions, nutrition potions, and calming drafts ... enough to last for several weeks. He made Sirius take two of each.

"I may not be able to get ya out of this hellhole, but I can take the hellhole out of this cell." Mad-eye took a small box out of another pocket and opened it up. Almost immediately the effect of the Dementors was removed. Sirius looked up at Mad-eye in disbelief. "The muggles have a technology called 'white noise' that removes the noise from the work area. This does the same thing for Dementors, basically canceling out their effect. This is new stuff Black; I think this is the first time this little box has been used in fact. Now, I've got to get busy, I've only got a little time left before I have to leave."

Mad-eye proceeded to transfigure the one-time cell into a livable one-room apartment complete with bed, dresser, proper WC facilities, table, and chairs – even reading material. "Take another one of those pepper-up and nutrition potions; I still have a few things for you do before I have to go." With that, Mad-eye took out another little box and placed it on the table he had conjured expanded it. Sirius watched as Mad-eye took out two pensives, both Auror type, capable of duplicating and storing memories.

"I know ya didn't get a trial before they placed ya here, so one of these is for you to put your memories in relating to the selection of the secret-keeper of the Potters, what happened to you on the night of their attack, and what happened when ya cornered Peter."

"I also figured ya be wondering about what happened to little Harry, so I've put some memories in here that show what happened in a little meeting I was present at with him. You'll be damn proud of him Black." With that Mad-eye pulled one last long box and placed it on the table. Reaching over, Sirius' hands were shacking badly as he open the box and pick up his wand.

"I thought they had snapped my wand." Sirius said quietly.

Just as it did all those years ago when he first picked up his wand at Ollivander's, gold and red sparks shot out of the tip as he gave it a wave. All of this was too good to be true. Sirius was sure his mind had finally snapped, and he was imagining all of this. He dropped the wand on the table and just collapsed on the floor crying uncontrollable.

Mad-eye picked up a calming drafts potion and got Sirius to take it. "Come on man, ya got to stay with me. Ya can figure it all out later. Now pick up that wand and let's get those memories extracted before ya fall apart again." Mad-eye firmly, but gentle help Sirius back up to the table, and picked up the wand again and handed it to him.

Sirius looked back up at Mad-eye, and then down at his wand. Gingerly he again reached his hand out and picked it up. "It's been so long." He said. "Let me practice for a second."

With that Sirius looked at the wand again and said: "Lumos". A faint light glowed at the end of the wand. "Nox", he said, and the light went out. Sirius took a deep breath. "Lumos", he said again, this time a little more forceful, a little surer of himself. The light was much brighter, and you could see the joy running through Sirius' sunken eyes as the spell did what it was meant to do.

For the next few minutes Sirius went through as many spells as he could remember. It felt great to have his wand again. He even tried to send a tickle charm over to Moody, but he just blocked it. "'Constant Vigilance' Moody, just seeing if you were paying attention".

He then extracted the memories regarding Peter, the Potters and the night they were attacked, what he found when he arrived and Godric's Hollow, and his encounter with Hagrid, and then what happened when he caught up with Peter, and his 'trip' to Azkaban.

"Here, ya go in these memories that I brought while I review yours. Then I'll make sure I have a copy of them, and return the originals to ya."

With that, Mad-eye, and Sirius entered their respective pensive. Moody was first to return, and was quite upset with what he had seen. If the Ministry had bothered to give Sirius his day in court, this would have never happened. But the Ministry was too concerned with their 'image' to let something like the 'facts' of this case get in the way. They had to be seen 'doing' something. "Useless bureaucrats." Moody whispered.

A few minutes later Sirius came out of the other pensive looking mad as hell and ready to fight. "I'll kill him! I swear Moody, if I ever see Albus Dumbledore again, I'll kill him! Putting Harry with Vernon and Petunia WHAT WAS HE THINKING!" Sirius staggered over to a chair and sat down nearly tired out. He took another vial of each potion without being told and then looked up at Moody again.

"That meeting – that was a meeting at Gringotts about Albus and James and Lily's Will, wasn't it?"

"Ya it was. Goldridge asked me, Madam Bones, and Tiberius Ogden along with Ragnok and Stonehand to be part of a Board of Inquiry.

We striped Albus of his roles in the Potter Will and appointed Flitwick and McGonagall to take his place. It seems that they have also recruited Lupin to help out so that the young man will have some connection with his past, and so he can tell him stories about James, Lily and the rest of the Marauders. But you don't have ta worry about killing Dumbledore. I think Harry did a fine job putting him in his place."

"He looks so much like James... but he has Lily's eyes – and her temper!" Sirius said mostly to himself. Then looking back up asked: "Moody, where did Harry get that sword? I've never seen anything like it in any of the Potters vaults, and I think James and I visited them all while we were growing up."

"Aye, the sword, ya noticed that did ya? I'm not sure how Harry came by that sword, but it ain't just any sword now is it? Harry called the sword Durendal – the sword of Prince Roland."

"Roland? As in Paladin Prince Roland?"

"Aye lad, that's the one. It seems our little Harry has taken a huge responsibility upon his shoulders. I don't think there has been anything close to a paladin in England for almost a thousand years! But ya should have been there to see young Harry! The pensive can't do the meeting justice. He was so powerful, so brave, so pissed at Dumbledore! He was acting as if he were already an adult. Just in a kid's body. I know his power was that of an adult! Ya remember at the end of the memory when Harry just faded from view and left the room? That shouldn't have been possible! An eight-year-old doesn't have the power, and doesn't know how to apparate! But he did it! I checked and there were anti-apparition ward and anti-portkey wards all around that room, and they were still intact after Harry left!"

Mad-eye then took a few minutes to explain to Sirius the current condition of the wizarding world, and the fact that without the body of Peter Pettigrew there was little chance of them getting him out soon, but that now the truth was known, they would be looking for an illegal animagus with the form of a rat.

"Just a few more things Black, you'll have a house elf to help you get the things you need and to keep you company as long as you are in here – Simons!"

There suddenly appeared a proud looking elf dressed in a neat uniform with the House of Ravenclaw crest on it. "Master Moody, you called?" Simons said with a deep bow.

For his part Mad-eye just looked at the house elf for a minute and blinked. "Simons, I didn't know ya belonged to a house. I thought ya were a free elf."

"I was a free elf for many years sir; however, Lord Ravenclaw has invited all free house elves to join him as a member of one of the two houses he holds. He has bonded with us, and has given us instructions as to how to act in representing his house. Azkaban still recognizes me as one of the house elves who worked here. That is why I still know where it is, even though it is unplotable. I did not have to return here now that there is a new Lord Ravenclaw; however, I will help you as a friend."

Moody's mind was spinning. He had never seen a house elf act like this. But what really got him was that the little elf had called him is 'friend'. It reminded him as to how Harry had treated his house elf when he was at Gringotts. He had always tried to treat the house elves with respect, and it could be said that he even 'liked' the little house elf, but to be called a 'friend'? Mad-eye knew he would have to meet with this new 'Lord Ravenclaw' to make sure he wasn't just building an army of house elves.

Simons continued: "We have also seen the example of one of the ancient house elves, and have seen the degree of faith and loyalty that they held. It is an inspiration to all house elves to strive to be worthy of such trust from our Masters."

"Your master is head of two houses? What is the other house if I may ask?"

"You can ask, however, I cannot answer. To do so would reveal too much information regarding my master, and he does not want the wizarding world to know who he is just yet."

"Since ya are no longer bound to Azkaban, I do not know if I can ask ya to help me. I was hoping ya could aid in keeping Mr. Black here company and looking after him."

"Black? Sirius Black?" Simons asked, looking over for the first time to the other occupant in the cell.

"Ya, Sirius Black. The Department of Magical Law Enforcement has placed him under a Theta Protocol, which in this instance means to 'restore the soul' and he'll need help with potions, food, cleaning, and the like. Do you think Lord Ravenclaw would allow ya to do this for him? It would not only be helping me and Sirius out, but also a young man named Harry Potter. Ya see Sirius is Harry's Godfather."

At this the house elf's eyes grew large. "I will ask Lord Ravenclaw presently." And with that the house elf disappeared.

Both Mad-eye Moody and Sirius Black looked stunned for a few moments after the little house elf had left. Who was this new Lord Ravenclaw? Why had he invited all the free elves to bond with him? Why did Simons eyes get so big when he found out that Sirius Black was Harry Potters Godfather?

Coming out of his stunned state Mad-eye continued his instruction to Sirius. "Now Black, while Simons is away let me tell ya the last few things. Even though we have marked your door as being under the Theta Protocol, if any of the guards look in, all they will see is the same old dungy cell. No one but a senior member of the DMLE should be able to open the door."

"I want ya to be careful and take care of yourself. Harry knows ya didn't betray his parents and he still loves ya greatly. Don't worry about Dumbledore, I think Harry has him on probation, but we'll see if that ol' leopard can change his spots. We'll keep looking for Pettigrew, and when we find him, we'll have everything we need to set ya free from this hellhole. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to get back up to the warden's office and then home. Take care of yourself Black." And with that Mad-eye got up and shook Sirius' hand, turned and headed out the door.

After talking to the warden, Mad-eye found himself back on the docks ready to board the rickety old ship back to the mainland. Handing Charon a Galleon, he said: "Home Charon, with all due speed."

Sirius' Cell

After Mad-eye Moody had left, Simons returned to Sirius' cell.

"I bring greeting from the Lord of the House of Ravenclaw. He bids the Lord of the House of Black welcome, and offers you the service of this humble house elf for as long as you require." Simons said with a bow. "I have been instructed by Lord Ravenclaw to take care of you the best I can."

"Thank you Simons, and thank Lord Ravenclaw when you see him. But right now, what I really need is sleep, and afterwards, maybe a simple meal."

"It shall be done Master Black." Simons said with a bow.

"Please, while it's just the two of us, call me Sirius."

Simons smiled, "As you wish ... Sirius".

Under the cupboard at Number 4 Privet Drive.

Harry and the others were still in chamber five talking about Professor Dumbledore.

"Try not to be too hard on him Harry. Even though now I'd like to skin him alive if I could..." Professor McGonagall said. "All this time that I could have been telling you about your parents and the wizarding world... Oh well, what's past is past, at least for now it sounds like he might try to do the right thing. Let's just see if everything works out in the end."

"Ya I know. But it seems to me that there are at least three different 'levels' of doing the right thing."

"First, you do the right thing because you're afraid of what will happen if you don't do it. I guess you could say you fear what would happen if you didn't do the right thing."

"Second, you do the right thing because you feel it is your duty to do it. Regardless as to how you really feel about it."

"And third, you do the right thing out of love. You do it because it is the right thing to do. You don't need any outside motivation. Right now I'd say Professor Dumbledore is doing what he is doing out of a

bit of fear and duty. We'll have to see if that can change in the future."

Just then a house elf appeared in the room with them. You could tell that he was very excited.

"Please forgive my interruption Lord Ravenclaw, my name is Simons. Before I came and joined your house, I was a free elf working on Azkaban, the wizarding prison. An old friend, Auror Alastor Moody, had just summoned me there. He asked me to look after a prisoner there named Sirius Black, to help him overcome the effects of the Dementors and the general conditions at Azkaban. I told them that I would have to ask you, since you are my new master. I promised to return to give them your reply."

The others in the room were stunned to hear Simons report. After a few moments Harry just walked over to a chair, sat down, put his head in his hands and started to cry. This brought Remus and Professor McGonagall out of their stupor, as they hurried over to help calm the boy.

"Shhh Harry, it's going to be alright. At least Mad-eye is trying to do something right." Remus said.

"How did Sirius look?" Professor McGonagall was almost afraid to ask.

Simons lowered his head, and answered softly, "He looked almost like a human skeleton." Harry's cries increased. "But from what I heard, he is still in his right mind and Master Moody brought a box with him that seems to block out the effects of the Dementors so Master Black's mind should be able to heal completely after a while. It is quite remarkable since his cell is the closest to where the Dementors reside."

Harry sniffed, trying to get control of himself. "Dementors? Remus, what a Dementor?"

Remus' face went white, as did Professor McGonagall's at the mention of the Dementors. "They are some of the most vile, dark creatures in the wizarding world. No one knows where they came from, but they 'exist' by sucking all of the joy and happiness out of a person. They are also used as one of the most vile punishment the

Ministry of Magic can pronounce – The Dementors Kiss. It is where a Dementor is brought a prisoner, and is allowed to 'suck' the soul of the person out. It doesn't 'kill' the person per say, it just leaves them a soulless husk that will eventually die."

Remus looked over at Harry and realized that he had probable said too much. Harry's eyes were again glowing like a high-powered searchlights, and the magic in the air was getting more and more intense.

"Simons, can you take me to Azkaban?" Harry said. It was not really a request, more like a command.

Simons lowered his head, his ears drooping lower. "I am sorry my Lord, Azkaban is unplottable, and has many ancient wards around it that prevent all but a few to go there, even house elves. I fear I have failed you." You could see that Simons was truly sorry that he couldn't do as his new master had asked. He really liked Harry. Right now though, he was having a hard time not pulling his ears, or punishing himself in some other way.

"It is not your fault Simons. You are doing as much as you can right now. But keep looking and seeing if there is anyway you can take me there, or bring Sirius here." Harry said.

Harry thought for a while, and then looked back at Simons. "Simons, you have my permission as Lord Ravenclaw to aid and assist Sirius Black in any way possible. Send greetings to the Head of the House of Black from the Head of the House of Ravenclaw. Do not let him know who I am yet. I think the stress and strain may be too much for him right now. You are to provide him what ever he needs to get better, and you are to keep me informed as to his condition. And remember, please call me Harry, and ... nice uniform."

Simons smiled, and bowed his head to Harry. "Yes... Harry, thank you. It shall be done." With that, Simons disappeared, to go back to Sirius at Azkaban.

It took Harry a few more moments to get settled down. After a while, he looked up to Remus and Professor McGonagall and said, "Let's go back and see how the house elves are getting on shall we?"

End Chapter 14

Next Chapter – The Rise of the House of Lupin

Essences of Lily – Chapter 15 – The Rise of the House of Lupin

Repost:

Entering the seventh chamber brought a big surprise for Harry. Instead of several hundred of poorly clothed, poorly cared for house elves, there were several hundred of well clothed, sharp looking and well cared for house elves.

"Boy, that didn't take long!"

Sassy blushed and said, "Well to tell you the truth Harry, we've been using the time function of chamber eight to get everything done in a 'short' period of time."

"Well I think that was great thinking on your part."

"Mika, have you been able to assess the other elves yet?"

"Yes my Lo... Harry. Most are general duty house elves, but you do have some that have specialties such as child care, animal husbandry, food preparation, and one young elf that seems well equipped for construction management."

"Really? Great! Who would that be?"

"That would be Ty sir. But I should warn you, he can be a little ... 'hyper' if you know what I mean."

"Well, no I don't, but there's no time like the present to find out. Ty! Would you please come here?"

An excited elf appeared in front of Harry with eyes as big as saucers. "Oh man, I can't believe it! I'm really standing right here in front of Lord Potter! It is such an honor sir." The little elf came up to Harry and shook his hand vigorously.

"It's nice to meet you too Ty." Harry said.

"My name! He knows my name!" Ty was literally jumping up and down.

"Ty, how do you think Raven would act right now?" Professor McGonagall asked. Almost immediately Ty got a very serious look on his face and blushed.

Holding his head down he apologized, "I am sorry Mistress McGonagall. It's just that it has been so long since anyone has had need of my special talent. It's not everyday someone wants an elf that does new construction or major remodeling.

"I understand Ty; I just want you to remember who you are addressing and who you represent at all times."

"Ty, I want you to come with me for a few minutes if you would." Harry said.

Taking the lead, Harry led Ty to the fifth chamber, and the model of Potters Manor.

"Ty, this building is a model of the Potter Manor that was in Wales many years ago. It was destroyed when Voldemort killed my Grandparents. The land that the building has been given to Remus as part of my parents Will. I would like you to look over this house, take everything into account. Make note of the material that this is built with, and see where it can be upgraded and improved. After your through with that, we will go to the goblins and have them get what you need. Then I'd like you to go to Wales with a team of other house elves to rebuild the Manor for Remus. But instead of Potter Manor, it will be Lupin Manor, and the beginning of the Noble House of Lupin."

"One other thing I want you to do; look at the different chambers in this trunk from chamber two through four and six, eight, and nine, and make sure there is a room or floor set aside for each of these functions. All costs for materials and whatever will come out of the Potter's Vaults. Remus may have his own money, but that wasn't meant to be spent building a house for him to live in."

One could see the excitement in Ty's eyes as Harry explained what he wanted. "Let me gather a few other elves who are skilled in design and planning, and I will get back to you in a few hours to let you know what we need, Master Harry." With that Ty disappeared and went to work looking at all the different rooms and chambers that would need to be built in the new Manor.

Harry went back to chamber seven he found a very upset Remus, and a shyly smiling Professor McGonagall.

"Harry, what do you think you are doing? Min just told me about that house elf you were meeting with, and if you think you are going to re-build Potter Manor for me, you are sadly mistaken!"

"Uncle Remus, you wound me!" Harry said dramatically with both hands on his heart. "I wouldn't think of rebuilding Potter Manor on your land. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to talk to Goldridge regarding a few things." With that Harry just faded away.

"I hate it when he does that! How am I to keep track of him when there's not a ward normally used in the wizarding world that will hold him?" Remus said.

"Maybe you'll just have to put a tracking charm on him to let you know where he is at. Also, I saw the most wonderful clock at the Weasley's last month. It had a hand on the clock for each of the members of the family, and pointed to the current location of each member of the family. Home, school, work, traveling, mortal danger you know, something like that."

"Min, I just don't know what to do. I mean he looks just like James did when I first met him on the train to Hogwarts all those years ago, and he still has three years to go before he goes there. But then I look at those eyes, and I listen to his words, and I could swear, I'm hearing Lily. How has he done it? How has he been able to keep such an even temper while staying with these... these ... they barely qualify as people, let alone family."

"I don't know Remus. It's almost as if he has a guardian angel helping him. Come on Remus, let's go back to the Manor and wait for him to return. I'll serve you tea this time."

Gringotts Bank

Harry 'slid' to the apparition sight in Diagon Alley. He didn't want 'shock' anyone by appearing in Gringotts directly.

Walking quickly to Gringotts, Harry kept his head down with the hope that no one would see his scar.

Entering the bank, Harry was greeted by Griphook, "Good evening Lord Potter, what brings you here at this late hour?"

"I'm sorry Griphook. I've been so busy trying to get thing ready for Remus and the new house elves that I didn't even notice what time it was. Should I come back tomorrow? And please, it's Harry. I'm not use to this 'Lord' stuff yet."

Griphook just nodded his head and smiled. He liked this wizard. Harry didn't take himself too seriously, he wasn't consumed with gaining power or wealth – which he had plenty of, and he didn't think himself 'above' other creatures. He treated house elves, goblins, witches, wizards, and human the same. It was quite refreshing.

"No Harry, we can take care of thing this evening. Please, come back to my office. I'll let Goldridge know you are here." With that, the two made their way through the maze of offices and conference rooms until they reached Griphook's office. Letting Harry in, Griphook excused himself to let Goldridge know he was there.

Of course Goldridge already knew Harry was in the bank as soon as he appeared in the Bank. There was another reason for leaving Harry in the office. They wanted to see how Harry acted when he was alone.

At first he just sat there waiting for Griphook to get back with Goldridge. After about ten minutes, he got out of his chair and started to look around the office. He looked closely at the painting on the wall, and watched as a famous battle from the last goblin revolution was played out on the canvas. You could almost hear the combatants scream.

Next Harry walked around the rest of the office looking at titles of the books in the bookcases, and the important looking papers on the desk.

As Harry would look at the title of the books he heard his 'Ma' say: 'these titles are in gobbledygook Harry. But according to the translation spell around your 'knowledge sphere' you are looking at 'Basics in Goblin Accounting', 'The Art of War', 'How to win friends and Influence people', 'Think and Grow Rich', 'The Richest Man in Babylon', and 'Goblin Revolution's 435 – 1914 – a Goblins

prospective'. That last book would be very interesting to see the Goblin's of the last couple of revolutions.'

'I'll ask Griphook if I can borrow it when he gets back okay?'

'That would be great dear.'

Harry continued looking around the room when he saw a piece of paper behind one of the file cabinets. Bending down, he picked it up and looked at it. 'Paid to the order of 'Blank' ten million Galleons. Signed Ragnok. Boy I better put that on Griphook's desk before somebody else tries to run away with this.' So that's exactly what he does, placing the bank draft on Griphook's seat so that he is sure to find it.

Harry looks around for a few more minutes, mainly at the weapons that are on the wall, but makes no attempt to pick them up since he doesn't know how to handle any of them yet. That would come when he received his 'squire' training.

Harry was tired of wondering around, and thought it best to just return to his chair to wait for Griphook and Goldridge to return.

As soon as Harry sat down, the door opened again showing not only Griphook and Goldridge, but Ragnok, Stonehand, and several other elderly and wise looking goblins. As the door opened, Harry stood as if by instinct, and upon seeing Ragnok, knelt in front of him with his head bowed, exposing the back of his neck to him.

"Rise young Lord, you have passed your test well." Ragnok said.

Harry stood with a puzzled look on his face. "Test my Lord?"

Ragnok laughed and motioned for Harry and the other goblins to sit down. "Yes, a test my young Lord. Several tests in fact. There were several members of the Goblin High Council that did not believe a mere wizard could have the traits of a Paladin or be a Guardian of the Goblin people at such a young age. When you showed up here it gave us an opportunity to show them just how good you were."

Harry realized that he had been manipulated again. Even though nothing bad happened, he had been manipulated! He just looked at Ragnok and tried to keep his breathing even. 'Calm down Harry,

you've just won some very big brownie points with the leader and high council of the Goblin nation, don't blow it by losing your temper right not. But do tell them how you feel.'

Harry was grateful for his 'Ma's presences. Without it, he was sure he would have 'exploded' on Ragnok and the others in the room.

For their part, the goblins in the room were getting a little worried. Some had heard the last two times this young man had lost his temper. Goldridge, Stonehand, and Griphook had been present at both of them. The goblins noticed the magic getting heavy in the air, and Harry's eyes started to glow like green spotlights in the dark of night. Stonehand was concerned that if this young wizard went off now, he could, effectively destroy the entire goblin government. So he was especially happy when he noticed the magic start to lighten, and the light in Harry's eyes start to diminish.

"Forgive me Lord Ragnok, I just got out from under one manipulating wizard; I did not expect to be under another one so quickly." Harry said through strained teeth and lips.

It was at that moment that Ragnok realized what he had done. "Please forgive me Lord Potter! It was not my intention to manipulate you, only to show the rest of the high council what a fine young man you are. No manipulation was intended."

"I understand... I think. What were the tests anyway?"

"Patience, honesty, self control, respecting others privacy, resisting temptation to name a few. But I am sure that is not what you came here for tonight. How may we help you Lord Potter?"

Harry took a few more minutes to calm down. During that time, he talked to 'Ma' and Durendal regarding the best way to ask for help from the goblins.

"My apologies noble sirs, I wanted to make sure I was under control enough to not make a scene."

"As you know, Remus Lupin was recently given the the land that included Potter Manor in Wales as a part of by parents Will. It is my firm belief that they had intended to rebuild the Manor before giving it to him, but died before that could take place. I am having some of

the house elves reviewing the model I have of Potter Manor, and will be asking them to rebuild it with several additions."

"I am in need of setting up agents here at the bank that can buy goods and materials from the wizarding and muggle world, and deliver it to the elves in a timely manner so that they can complete the construction as quickly as possible."

"It has also come to my attention that the goblins are among the world most competent ward casters. I would be willing to pay to have a team of your best casters to come and set the cornerstones for the Lupin Manor and also to set the wards around the land as well."

The entire group of goblins looked at Harry for a few seconds not knowing what to say. It had been many centuries since a human wizard had asked a goblin to set the wards around their property, and none of them could remember a wizard asking a goblin to be their agent in procuring items.

"Please give us a few minutes my Lord. It is a most unusually request you make of us." Ragnok stated, and called the other goblins to gather around him to discuss the matter.

'You handled that very well Harry, I'm very proud of you.' 'Ma' said.

'Thanks 'Ma'. Hey, do you think you could spell the knowledge sphere so that as the goblins are talking, it could interpret what they are saying into English, and then let me hear it? I'm not trying to ease-drop, but where their conversation concerns my money and me; I'd like to know what is going on.'

'Okay, but don't get into the habit of listening in on others conversations.'

Suddenly the conversation went from gobbledygook to English.

"...I say if he is foolish enough to turn his money over to those he does not know, then he does not deserve to have his money. We could accept the work orders, buy the cheapest materials we can find, and over charge his account for many times the cost of the goods, putting more gold in our pockets."

"I do not think you understand the importance of this young man Greedhip. He is a Paladin! He is honest and upright in all his dealings with people of all races, and breeds. Just look at how he handled the ten million Galleon bank note. To most other people they would have tried to pocket the note without a second thought since it was not made out to anyone. But how did Lord Potter behave? Without hesitating, he placed the note on my son's chair where he would be sure to find it. You do not want to be on the wrong moral side of the issue with this young man. He has the power to protect us, and he has the power to tear us apart. And he will only get stronger as time goes on. No, we will not be careless with Lord Potter. We will help him and make a good profit in the mean time, but we will not take advantage of him in this manner. Is it agreed?" Ragnok asked.

The other goblins discussed the issue for a few more minutes before agreeing with Ragnok. They then turned back around and made their announcement to Harry.

"Harry, it has been agreed that we will act as your agents in this matter, and will also get a team of our best ward casters to come and set the wards and the cornerstones when it is time. Do you have any idea how long that will be?"

"One moment Ragnok and I may be able to tell you. Ty! Are you ready yet?"

"Oh, I am sorry Harry, but unless a house elf is keyed to the wards around Gringotts bank, they can not just enter." Griphook explained. "It seems your house elf Sassy was the exception since she was bound to you prior to your entering into the bank."

"Oh, sorry about that, just give me a few minutes then." Harry said, and without another word, vanished from sight.

Arriving back at Number 4, Harry called out again. "Ty! Ty! Do you have a plan ready yet?"

With that the very excited Ty appeared into the room with his arms full of drawings, specifications, project management time lines, and bill of materials list.

"Yes Master Harry, I just finished and I am ready to start as soon as Master Lupin gives us permission to start building on his land, and I get a load of these materials."

"Okay, let's go back to Gringotts and see if the goblins are willing to help us." Harry reached over and, touching Ty on the shoulder 'slid' both himself and the house elf back to the bank.

The goblins were shocked to see Harry come back with a house elf in tow. Several including Stonehand immediately started casting spells to insure that the wards around Gringotts were working properly. Not only were the wards working properly, they did not show any sign of being breached or attacked. It was if nothing had happened to them at all.

As Harry and Ty re-appeared in front of the Goblin leadership at Gringotts, Harry started to introduce Ty to the members of the Goblin leadership.

"Excuse me gentlemen, this is my friend Ty. He will be the house elf in charge of construction of the new Lupin Manor." Harry took the time to start to introduce all of the goblins to Ty.

Ty for his part became extremely nervous. He knew of the bitter feelings between Goblins and house elves, and was more than a little bit concerned when he saw that he was the only house elf present in the room. He knew his new master would never knowingly place him in danger, but could young master Harry protect him here and now?

As if answering the question, Harry noticed that the Goblin who had previously identified as 'Greedhip' striking out at Ty with a vicious goblin curse. Without even thinking, Harry blocked the curse, and just a moment later, was standing in front of Greedhip, one hand holding the hand that Greedhip had cast the spell with, the other hand held Durendal up against Greedhip's neck glowing black and green, ready to separate his head from his shoulders.

Greedhip was shocked that a human could act so fast or block a goblin spell. This should not be possible! Greedhip then made the mistake of looking at Harry's face and eyes. Harry's eyes were once again shining like two large searchlights boring into his own eyes.

The magic was once again heavy in the air, and the other goblins seemed to be pressed back against the walls of the chamber. "What do you think you are doing goblin?" Harry asked very coldly through gritted teeth.

For his part, Greedhip could not utter a sound for fear of having his neck cut from the blade of the sword that was currently being pressed against his neck.

Ragnok was able to speak saying, "Lord Potter! Please excuse my associate! He was not aware of your abilities of passing through our wards and bring others with you! We do not wish a confrontation at this point! Please!"

After several seconds Durendal disappeared from his hand, but he still held the goblin by one hand, while his eyes burned a hole through Greedhip's brain.

"As you wish my Liege, but if this goblin attacks another one of my friends, I will not stay my hand!" Harry replied. Slowly Harry released Greedhip, and Greedhip, to his credit, moved as far away from Harry as he could.

Stonehand just watched the altercation to see what could be learned about this young lord, and was quite pleased with what he saw. Powerful, brave, decisive, willing to defend a friend when threatened, not attacking blindly out of rage or anger.

After taking a few more minutes to settle down, Harry turned his attention back to his house-elf.

"Now let's get down to business. Ty, how many other house elves could you use to construct this manor, and how long do you think it would take?" Harry asked.

Ty had also been somewhat shaken up over what had expired in the last few moments, but now felt a strange source of pride knowing that his new master could in fact defend him in the most threatening situations.

Taking a few moments to center himself, and remembering the type of loyalty and service he wanted to give to his young new master, Ty started his report:

"There should be three shifts of at least two hundred house elves to get thing done in a seven day time frame." With that, Ty spread out his project time line showing what needed to be done when, and what had to be done first before something else could start.

Everyone gathered around to look at the work Ty had done. "This is fantastic!" Goldridge said. "If every plan were designed to this level of detail, you could tell where you were at any time on the project and make sure everything got done on time! It may take a little bit more to set up in the beginning, but in the end, you would save both time and money, and have an outstanding product."

"Harry, there are several projects that will be coming up in the Goblin world over the next few years. With your permission, I would like Ty to work with us on those projects as well."

A great gasp came up from several of the other goblins. It had been many millennia since there had been peace between the goblins and this branch of the elf family. House elves were normally thought of as the 'untouchable' of the magic world. Doing those labors that were beneath others. To even talk to one was frowned upon. Now the leader of the Goblin world was asking a HUMAN to let his house elf work on a project in the goblin world. It was unheard of!

Several of the council started to complain most vigorously about the situation, but Ragnok stopped them with a glare, and a wave of his hand.

"Harry is here to show all of us how to treat each other. I have not seen him treat me any differently then a human, or a house elf for that matter. I think it is time we look at the prejudices in our society, and begin removing some of them."

With that taken care of Harry spoke up again: "Let me go and get Remus so we can get his permission to start working on his Manor." Again Harry 'slid' back to chamber five in his trunk at Privet Drive.

Minerva and Remus were still in the kitchen having a spot of tea when Harry 'slid' in. To say they were both surprised would have been an understatement.

"Uncle Remus! I need you for a few minutes at Gringotts okay?"

Without waiting for an answer, Harry took Remus by the arm, and as he was standing up, 'slid' with him back to Griphook's office at Gringotts. The others in the room were just as surprised this time as they were the last to see Harry leave without any of the bank alarms going off, and even more surprised when he re-appeared with another wizard still holding his teacup.

"Uncle Remus? We need your permission to rebuild the Manor on your land, and to have the goblins ward the building and the land. How bout it?"

...

"Say 'Yes' Uncle Remus." Harry prompted.

"'Yes' Uncle Remus." Remus said still in shock.

"Will that do? Ty, do you know where the land is now?"

Ty looked thoughtful for a few moments with his head held down. Then suddenly, his head came up with a big grin on his face. "Yes Master Potter I know where Master Lupin's land is located."

"Great! Now, let me get Uncle Remus back home before he can start arguing." Again without a sound, Harry and Remus Lupin simply disappeared from Gringotts Bank to re-appear back at the kitchen where Remus and Minerva were taking tea.

"Well, I have a few more things to take care of at Gringotts, I'll be home soon." Harry said as he departed.

Remus was still holding his teacup in the same position it was in before he left. He looked over at Minerva with a shocked look on his face and asked: "What the hell just happened?"

Minerva had the good sense to swallow her tea and put down her cup before she started to laugh.

"You're not helping Minerva!" Remus yelled.

"I sorry Remus, but it's just feels so good to have one of the Marauders pranked once in a while. James would be so proud."

Back at the Bank

The members of the goblin high council could not believe their eyes. Here was a human wizard – a child – that could get through the strongest wards in the goblin world without setting off any of the alarms! Not only that, he proved he could bring someone back with him into the bank and back out again without setting off the alarms!

Some of the council members were scared, others were mad, and still others were in too much shock to know what to do.

"I can assure you that Lord Potter will never cause harm to the goblin nation, as long as we are in the right. Now can you see why we will not cheat Lord Potter Greedhip?" Ragnok said with an evil grin on his face.

For his part Greedhip just dumbly shook his head. He was just glad Lord Potter couldn't understand gobbledygook.

Harry 'slid' back into the room and stood next to Ty.

"Ragnok, could I possibly ask that Goldridge, and your son Griphook act as agents for me. They will be paid twice their regular rate, and receive a commission for the supplies they procure."

"I think that would be acceptable Lord Potter."

"Ty, could you please make a copy of your papers here and give them to Goldridge and Griphook? Then you can go back to my current residence and start organizing the elves into their work shifts. Tomorrow you can come back here to work with Goldridge and Griphook regarding the delivery of the materials."

"Of course Master Harry, thank you." As quickly as his task was done, the goblins keyed Ty to the wards around the bank allowing him to go back to Number Four Privet Drive.

"Just one more thing, Griphook, I noticed you had a book on your shelf call 'Goblin Revolution's 435 – 1914 – a Goblins prospective'. Do you think I could barrow it for a few days?"

"You read gobbledygook Lord Potter?" Griphook asked.

"Among other things."

"Of course you can read it."

"Thank you. Well, it's late and I need to be going home. Good evening my Lords," Harry bows to the members of the high council. "Ragnok, Stonehand, Goldridge, Griphook... Greedhip." With another bow, Harry 'slid' back to Number Four Privet Drive.

Greedhip stood there shacking with fear, and pale as can be.

"Be glad he didn't use Durendal to see if your heart was pure." Said Ragnok.

During the time of actual construction on Lupin Manor, Harry, Remus, Sassy, Mika, and the some of the other elves took the time to visit all of the Potter and Ravenclaw properties. The main purpose for this was to make general repairs and determine the staffing levels of the different locations.

Harry was in awe of the shear number of properties he currently held, and with Remus started to think of how some of these properties could be put to better use.

"Remus, are there other children in the wizarding world like me who have lost their parents in the fight against Voldemort?" Harry asked.

"I'm afraid so Harry, more then I care to think about."

"Is there any way some of these properties could be converted into orphanages to take care of those children? It would give the house elves some one to look after, and put the properties to better use?"

"I think that's a great idea Harry, but you should talk to Filius and Minerva as to the legal aspects of something like that. Then there's the matter of staffing the homes, and getting the people paid, making sure they do a proper job etc. That's more then I know how to do. Maybe your 'agents' at Gringotts would know how to set that up."

"Thanks Uncle Remus, I'll talk to Aunt Min as soon as we get back tonight and Uncle Flitwick this Saturday when I meet him for my business training at Gringotts."

Ty, the house elf, had been spending time around Remus to try to get to know him a little bit better. He thought by doing this he could customize things more to his liking. This meant that he had seen Remus go through a transformation into a werewolf on the full moon. Now Ty understood why Harry wanted to include a 'chamber nine' in Remus' house. It would give him someplace to go to that would prevent him from injuring anyone other than himself. Ty ended up putting it in the sub-basement of the house, below the potions lab.

The time Harry hadn't spent visiting his properties, he spent in the Rune Chamber (chamber 8) working in flextime with Remus and Sassy. They would go over the books Harry and Sassy had read, and then take the regular Hogwarts classes to cover everything from Arithmancy to Wizard Etiquette.

Being in flextime Harry found that he could use his wand without being noticed by the Ministry. This was a great benefit while doing Charms, DADA, and Transfiguration. There were even times when Remus would duel with Harry in flextime, but he didn't do it very often since it soon became clear that Harry was just as quick as the werewolf, and if you ever were 'tagged' by one of Harry's spells, you knew it!

Harry had been careful not to show Remus that he was just about as fast, and much stronger when he cast wandlessly, but he did slip up a few times. Once, when he was shielding himself from one of Remus' spells while casting one of his own. Remus just couldn't understand why he couldn't hit Harry.

Harry really didn't need to worry about a spell hitting him. It seemed the 'Blessing of the Heir' charm was still strong enough to have stopped any spell that Remus could have thrown at Harry, but the fact of the matter was that it was weakening. How long would that last? No one knew. 'Ma' didn't know, Harry didn't know, and no one else knew about it. Harry didn't know what the spell was, and even through 'Ma' did know, this was one spell that could only be cast by either the Head of House on their selected heir, or a mother on her child after they had been selected as the heir. So that meant the

only person who could 'refresh' the charm was Sirius, and he was still in Azkaban.

Simons was keeping Harry up-to-date with Sirius' health and well being, which was improving daily. Harry still hadn't told Sirius who Lord Ravenclaw was, he felt that was something best addressed face-to-face.

Harry would also take time each day to meditate where he would visit his 'Ma' and go to 'Potter in the Mind' to work in even a slower time flex. As a result, Harry had completed his page training under Durendal, and was well into his squire training.

After a few 'months' as a page in a medieval castle, Harry found that the training was hard, labor intensive, and not always pleasant work. But he was determined to see the training through. The page's duties mainly related to the care and feeding of the different animals there might be in the 'kingdom' and physically taking care of the fixing and cleaning of the castle or lands round about. It gave him a feeling of completeness, like you were building a firm foundation of a building before you tried to put on a capstone.

As a squire, Harry was taught how to handle all type of weapons, mainly swords; Side sword, Back sword, Rapiers, Épée, Foils, Hunting sword, Saber, Long swords, Broadswords, etc. Along with knives, daggers, axes, flails, mace, spears, lances, and other items.

Durendal its self was considered to be an 'Arming Sword' or 'Knightly Sword', though it could 'morph' into a longer, heavier two-handed broadsword if the situation called for it.

The essences of Durendal had also been doing a great deal of learning from 'Ma' with regards to the current situation in the wizarding world, and in modern or different fighting techniques. It was determined, however, that Durendal would teach only what he knew of swordsmanship, and let other people teach these newer fighting styles.

Harry had also been working very hard on his physical fitness: running, lifting, moving things in 'Potter in the Mind'. Working with Durendal he learned how to move with a sword. He also learned how to move and defend against different forms of attacks.

There were times that Harry would go to sleep in the castle so tired that he didn't know if he would be able to wake up the next day, but he always did.

It was now September 11, the day of a new moon, and also the day Professor Dumbledore was to have the wards taken down from Privet drive. It was just after 4:49 AM when Harry went down to the Rune Chamber in his trunk and again performed the mind expansion, and core expansion charms on himself again. He would wait until Dumbledore showed up to pull more power into his core, or if the Professor didn't show up today, he would destroy the blood rune stones and 12:01 AM on September 12th.

The clock struck 12 Midnight as Harry exited the back door on Number Four Privet Drive. He had just been notified by one of his ward alarms that a powerful wizard had just entered the premises.

"Good evening Professor Dumbledore, you're cutting your timing a little close this evening." Harry said in an unemotional tone.

"Good evening Harry. Isn't it a bit late for you to be up? I have been quite busy the last few days trying to set things right with a few people. Are you sure you want this done Harry?" Asked the Professor.

"Yes sir. It really won't be necessary. I will be moving from here as soon as the elves finish a few things."

"Since you're here, maybe you could help me with a few things Professor."

"Anything Harry, what do you need?"

"Could you please set up your silent charm around the house and the back yard? I would also like you to set up several layers of shielding charms around the Dursley's house and yard? I would hate for anything to happen to it."

Professor Dumbledore looked questioningly at Harry, but complied with the wards around the house and the back yard. "Just what are you intending to do Harry?" He asked.

"Well, I'm sure you've noticed that I'm just a little more powerful than your average eight-year-old wizard. I'm going to tell you part of how that came about. Not that you have a right to know, but I thought you should see part of what you have been denying the young witches and wizards for the last fifty-some years."

'Harry, what are you doing? You shouldn't tip your hand to him. He'll try to find some way to use this against you. He could even have you declared as a dark wizard if you're not careful.' 'Ma' said.

'Ma', I just want to show him that he's not as smart as he thinks he is. I also want to put a little fear into him so that maybe he will leave me alone.'

'Harry... What are you planning to do?'

'Just stick around 'Ma', this ought to be fun!'

With that, Harry just stopped listening to his 'Ma' and turned his attention back to the Headmaster.

"This won't take too long tonight Headmaster. I know you have to get back to Hogwarts and the new school year."

"You see, as I've already told you, my parents found out about the magical block you talked the Ministry to put on any new born who had a magical strength over 100 after you defeated Grindelwald, and how you had them lower that figure to 40 after the rise of Voldemort.

They were able to stop the healer before she was able to put the block on me, and if they were smart enough to figure that out, they you know others were too."

"But that's not all. Mum came up with a charm that would allow the parents to expand my magical core. I won't bore you with the details. Let's just say that it was very effective."

"Dad found out that if you 'transferred' some of his magical energy to me after mum expanded my magical core, the results were even more impressive."

"Of course I had to read all about this from some of the journals they left me after I reached my eighth birthday – just a few months ago. I found out I could use other magical item to 'draw' magic from to help expand my magical core. These blood runes shields have been very helpful. I guess it works the best because you used MY BLOOD to create them didn't you?" Harry was beginning to get a little upset. He stopped and took some deep breaths to clam himself down.

"Since I'm going to be moving soon, and these blood runes shields will be coming down tonight, I thought I would use them one last time before destroying them."

"No Harry you mustn't try that! It's far too dangerous! The magical backlash would be tremendous! You won't survive!" Dumbledore was feeling panicky. For some reason he found that he couldn't move at that time – most unusual.

"Well then Professor, you better hope your shield hold up."

With that Harry did as he had in months past, but this time using his wandless magic to connect the four blood rune stones together and bringing the focus to himself. He started slowly, drawing just the excess power that was generated from each stone. Then, slowly, he increased the amount of power he was drawing from each stone.

All Albus could do was watch in awe as this young boy was drawing in more power then should be humanly possible. He noticed that the blood shield was getting weaker around Number Four Privet Drive – Soon the shield would be completely down.

Harry was having a hard time keeping all of the power in his core. So as a last resort, he started to transfer some of the power to the part of his core that he got from 'Tom Riddle'. It wouldn't hold much, but it would be just enough to finish what he had planned.

Then it happened. The blood rune shield around Number Four fell! Harry felt it fall, Dumbledore felt it fall, and any magical creature within 50 kilometers felt it fall.

With a primal yell Harry made a jerking motion with his hand and summoned all four of the blood rune stones to him at once.

As the stones came rushing to him, Harry mentally summoned Durendal.

Wishing Durendal to be a bigger, heavier sword, it morphed into a large two-handed broadsword.

Harry was still yelling as the stones approached at top speed. In what looked like one fluid movement Harry and Durendal smashed each stone as it came within range.

The magical backlash was something to behold! The light seemed so bright it was as if you could see through the Dursley's house! The sound was as if you detonated an atomic bomb in the Dursley's back yard.

Professor Dumbledore was just able to get a strong Protego shield behind a thick granite wall in front of him before Harry destroyed the stones, but the force of the explosion knocked Professor Dumbledore all the way back against the furthest shield he had placed around the property.

As he got back up on his feet, he noticed Harry standing in the same place he had been before, his clothes completely blown off, but not a scratch on him, the stones – dust under his feet. He just stood there, head down, breathing hard. Durendal was being held in his right hand resting the edge of the sword on the ground.

'I've got to stop the boy! He doesn't know how dangerous that was. He could have been killed! Then what would we have done if Voldemort ever shows up again. I must take him away for his own safety!'

Dumbledore walked slowly and quietly closer to Harry. When he was in range he raised his wand and fired off four quick spells. "EXPELLIARMUS! STUPEFY! PETRIFICUS TOTALUS! INCARCEROUS!"

That should be enough to take down an un-armed wizard! Dumbledore thought. But when he was through, he looked up to where Harry had been standing... where Harry was still standing. Only this time he was looking right at Professor Dumbledore.

The light from Harry's eyes flooded the backyard, his aura clearly seen in the dark of the night. Turning slowly to face his attacker Harry walks to where the Headmaster was again transfixed to the ground.

"That is the second time you have attacked me Headmaster! The first time I gave no response. What do you think I should do this time? What would you do?" Harry's tone of voice was as cold as an arctic blast from the North Pole and it made Dumbledore literally shiver.

"I... I'm sorry Harry, I ... I thought you might have been hurt and need to be taken to the hospital." Dumbledore lied.

Durendal flashed darkly as the Headmasters answer.

"Would you like to try again Headmaster? Durendal doesn't seem to like your answer.

"I am sorry Harry, and I am concerned for your welfare. You should not have been able to do something as dangerous as that, you could have been killed! You must be properly trained if you have this type of power!"

"Are you volunteering to train me Headmaster? Were you ever planning on training me?"

Dumbledore was honestly afraid of Harry right now. He knew he could not have done what Harry had just done. He had planed to go to each blood rune stone and deactivate them one-at-a-time. But to basically rip all of the power out of all four blood rune stones, summon them to you and then destroy them at one time would have taken an unimaginable amount of power!

Harry continued walking closer to Professor Dumbledore, his scar was starting to glow a sickly green color – the same color as the Avada Kedavra curse. An aura began to grow around the scar that felt dark and sickly. Harry felt that he should be the one ruling over the wizarding world. Who else had his power?

Why should he still be living here with these muggles when he had the power to control them all? What had they ever done to him? Only hurt and ridiculed his very existence! For all he cared at the

moment, he was of a mind to just go in the house and kill them while they slept!

"I tire of your interference Headmaster. I think you have caused me enough grief and heart-ache for more then one life time!"

Harry's eyes were blazing red as he raised his sword with the intent of striking Albus Dumbledore down. The Headmaster was still stuck firmly to the ground - unable to defend himself.

Just as Harry went to swing the mighty Durendal, the great blade again turned as black as coal sensing the change of heart in its wielder. A massive discharge of energy came down the blade into Harry's arm.

Uhhhhh! Harry screamed as he dropped the sword and dropped down to his knees. A bright flash of sickly green magic flared around Harry as if he had been hit with a hundred killing curses!

Professor Dumbledore found that he could move again, and headed directly to catch Harry.

Harry held up his hand and tried to stop the Headmaster from coming over: "NO! Professor – stay away from me, please! I could still be dangerous! I'm sorry; I just don't know what came over me!"

Sassy was suddenly next to Harry. "Master Harry! What happened! Professor Dumbledore, please stand back from Master Harry before I have to remove you. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?" Sassy was upset to say the least.

"Sassy, Professor Dumbledore didn't do anything to me. I did it to my self." Harry said.

"Oh, is that why you don't have any cloths on?" Sassy asked.

"Wha... Sassy, could you please help me with this – I don't know what I can or should do right now."

Sassy snapped her fingers, and Harry was again dressed in pajamas and slippers on his feet.

"Thank you Sassy. Sassy? Could you please levitate Durendal into the house? I don't think I should try to pick it up right now."

"Professor, with the wards around Privet drive down, I would ask you to please leave. Your presence is not welcome here at the moment."

"But Harry you could be injured. I wish you would come with me to Hogwarts and have Madame Pomfrey check you over. It wouldn't take that long."

"I am afraid I'll have to decline your generous invitation. I have people here who can 'check me over' and provide anything that I might need. Good evening Professor. And please, don't try attacking me from the back. I don't think you would like Sassy's response to it."

Harry slowly and shakily got up and moved back into Number Four Privet Drive. All Professor Dumbledore could do was watch the receding figure of a young man who was largely untrained, with probable more raw magical power than anyone else in the world. What was he to do? It was obvious the harder he pressed the boy, the more he resisted. Maybe there was another way. If the direct approach didn't work, maybe he could use others to influence Harry into seeing his point of view. He would have to talk to Professor McGonagall and maybe even Remus Lupin the next time he saw him. With that thought in mind, Professor Dumbledore apparated to Hogsmeade.

Inside Chamber five, in the Cupboard at Number Four Privet Drive.

As soon as Harry got back into chamber five he was verbally assaulted by Remus.

"Harry what the hell do you think you were doing out there? I swear the ground was shaking, and when I tried to get out there to see what is going on, Sassy stuns me! You look like hell and I know those aren't the same cloths you went to bed in. So Harry, just what's going on?"

Harry looked rather sheepish at Remus. Truth be told, he felt like hell and a little confused as well. Harry knew he wouldn't be able to avoid telling Remus so he went ahead and told him what he had just

done, including the attempted attack on the Headmaster, and the way Durendal reacted to him.

"YOU DID WHAT? DO YOU KNOW YOU COULD HAVE BEEN KILLED DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?" Remus raged.

"Ya, but I wasn't hurt was I?" Harry tried to justify himself.

"No? I'll agree that something did protect you when you destroyed the blood rune stones, but the blast was big enough to shred your former flannels right off your body. And then there's Durendal's reaction when you tried to attack Professor Dumbledore. Were you really trying to KILL him Harry?"

"I don't know Uncle Remus; I don't want to talk about it right now."

"You're staying right here and telling me what happened tonight young man! We're going to have a long discussion about this. Harry, you have got to realize that you have taken a huge responsibility on your shoulders, and either you are going to learn how to handle it, or it will destroy you. Now, tell me again what happened when you destroyed the blood rune stones."

Harry sighed; he didn't want to be there. He didn't want to be with Remus right now. He just wanted to go to bed and forget everything that had happened in the last few hours. Suddenly Harry heard 'Ma' in his subconscious mind: 'you better think hard and talk to Remus now, because when you get here you're going to be talked to again!' She sounded more than just a little upset. Harry now knew he was trapped. He couldn't get out of talking to some adult just by going to sleep. It was either talk to Remus now and 'Ma' later, or 'Ma' now and Remus later.

Harry finally decided just to face the problem that he had facing him now, and worry about 'Ma' when the time came. He knew she would be listening in to their conversation, so maybe he could get out of talking to her separately if he talked to Uncle Remus now.

Harry started by reminding Remus that he had told Professor Dumbledore to have the wards around Privet Drive down by the 11th of September, so technically, since it was after midnight; Harry was in his right to take the wards down with Durendal as he said at the Board of Inquiry.

"I'm not here for you to justify your actions Harry; I'm here trying to help you see what went wrong. Just go on. What happened when you started pulling the energy from the blood rune stones?"

Harry began to explain how he felt as the magic rushed into him, filling his recently expanded magical core. How he could feel that there would be more magic there than he could safely take in, and how he directed the last bit of energy over to the part of his core that had been left in him from a 'Tom Riddle'. How he then summoned the stones to him, and used Durendal to smash them to powder.

He then explained how the Headmaster attacked him again. "I don't remember clearly what happened. It was like another influence just came over me. I was filled with such rage and hate, not just for the Headmaster, but for everybody, magical and muggle, I hated them all." Harry unconsciously started to rub his scar. "When I saw the Headmaster just standing there, all I could think about was removing him. He was an obstacle to my plans. He had prevented me from completing my goal of total domination; he had to be removed."

Harry had tears in his eye as he looked up into Remus' eyes as he recounted the next part. "I now know how to do the killing curse. Not just the words, but the feelings and emotions required. It was pure hate! When I raised the sword to strike Professor Dumbledore, I felt pure hate enter into my heart. That was when Durendal struck back at me. I remember feeling pain beyond measure as I felt the hatred being burned out of my heart. I remember the pain and sorrow of being so 'unclean'. I then saw a bright green flash of spent magic around me and the 'evil me', for lack of a better term, was subdued, if not completely gone."

"I then asked the Headmaster to please leave, and not try to attack me from behind again." Harry sat quietly for a few minutes while he and Remus reviewed what had just happened. Finally, Harry stirred, and wiping his eyes, said: "I'll go down to chamber eight to meditate for a while, could you have Sassy please bring Durendal down there when you see her?" Remus shook his head 'yes'. He was still thinking about what he had heard.

Getting up, Harry first got cleaned up before going down to chamber eight. When he got there, he found that Sassy had already set up a

wizarding tent, fully stocked for an extended stay in flextime, and Durendal was already there mounted on the wall.

Harry activated the flextime function of the chamber and got into a comfortable position before starting to meditate. Soon Harry could feel himself entering the portion of his mind where 'Ma' and 'Potter in the Mind' resided.

Seeing the expression on 'Ma's face, Harry fell to his knees and started crying again. He could see the disappointment on her face. He knew that he had failed her. 'I am so sorry 'Ma!' Harry said. Then he cried all the harder. Some time after that, Harry became aware of someone holding him, and comforting him. He looked up to see 'Ma' there, hugging him, rocking back and forth, and humming a lullaby to him.

'Shhh, be quiet little child. I know how much pain you're in. Just stay here for a few minutes.' 'Ma' kept holding on to him, giving him comfort. Before he knew it, Harry was sleeping.

When he awoke, he felt somewhat more rested, but still sad and remorseful concerning what had happened with the blood rune stones, and Professor Dumbledore. He found 'Ma' waiting for him where she usually was.

'Good morning Harry. I hope you're feeling better. We need to talk.'

'Ya 'Ma', I know. Do you know what happened to me yesterday?'

'We'll get to that in a moment. First, I want you to come with me and look at something.'

'Ma' took Harry by the hand, and led him down to where he could see his magical core. It had been a long time since Harry had seen his core. To say he was impressed with how it had grown would be an understatement.

'It is impressive isn't it Harry? I would daresay that you currently have the largest magical core since Merlin. Especially after that stunt you pulled last night. You actually exceeded the size of your core last night didn't you?'

Harry had to shake his head 'yes' at 'Ma's observation.

'Do you remember what you did after that Harry?'

Harry thought for a minute, and then remembered the small core of 'Tom Riddle' that had attached its self to him when Voldemort killed his mother.

'I pushed the rest of the magic into 'Tom Riddle's core didn't I?' Harry asked.

'Yes you did Harry. Now come over here and look at that part of your core.'

Harry and 'Ma' then walked around the core chamber to where the 'Tom Riddle' core was. Harry gasped when he got close to it. This part of the core was a sickly green color, pulsing with rage and hatred for everything. There was a crystalline shield around this portion of the core that almost completely encompassed it.

'The shield is what Durendal put around it when you almost lost control. He is using the magical within this part of the core to create and maintain the shield. He hopes this will slowly be drained off this part of the core until it's basally harmless.'

'Just what is that 'Ma'?

'As close as I can figure out, there must be some part of this 'Tom Riddle' within Voldemort. Maybe Voldemort is 'Tom Riddle', which is more likely the case. Durendal previously told me that this core fragment would be a source of great knowledge and even greater temptation. I think we saw part of what the temptation would be last night. If you ever let this part of your core control your thoughts and actions, with the power that you have, you would be a far worse Dark Lord then Voldemort ever thought of being. This is where those feeling of hate came from last night, and the knowledge of how to do the killing curse. All that came from this little portion of that monsters core.'

'We always knew there was something bad within this core, we just didn't realize how bad. It was dormant until you pushed power from the blood rune stones into it.'

'How long will it take to drain the power away from it?' Harry asked.

'We're not sure dear, but in all probability, it will take several years, maybe decades. It will be important that in the future you don't push any more energy in its direction. If you did, it might break the shield, and we'd have another episode like we did last night.'

'You were actually lucky you were holding Durendal when you went to attack the Headmaster. If you hadn't, there would have been nothing to prevent you from casting the curse you were thinking of.'

'You mean the Killing curse?'

'Yes dear, the Killing curse. But one thing you have to remember; every time you use that curse, you lose a piece of yourself. Much as 'Tom Riddle' or Voldemort did when he used the Killing curse on your Mum.'

'If you had only had your wand, or used wandless magic, Durendal could not have stopped you and you would have succeeded in kill the Headmaster, and gone on to be a Dark Wizard. Since Durendal was there however, he was able to detect the change in the 'heart' of your soul and since he can only work with – and can be controlled by those who's hearts are pure, he had to find a way to reject you. He did that by redirecting the magic around 'Tom's' part of your core and try to remove as much of the bad influence from you as he could.'

'You mean I'm no longer worthy to hold the Sword of Roland?' Harry was sounding greatly worried. Did this mean he couldn't be a paladin, or keep the promises he had already made to the Goblins?

'Harry,' 'Ma' said placing an understanding hand on his shoulder, 'it means you made a mistake, and have to make up for that mistake. The mistake wasn't the way you got rid of the rune stones, that was just being a showoff. The main mistake was not being able to control your feeling and emotions and almost killing an individual not worthy of death – and you would have killed the Headmaster if not for Durendal.'

'Now Harry, what do you think you could do to over come this mistake?' 'Ma' was trying to make this a moral teaching experience.

'Well, first off I know I almost did something very wrong and I can't tell you how bad I felt about it. I think that I should also write a formal letter of apology to Professor Dumbledore and for lack of a better word 'ask his forgiveness' for my thoughtless actions. I already have a firm desire to never do something like that again, but I still felt like there is something missing. What else do I need to do?'

'Well, I think you have most of the bases covered, but there are still a few things more you can do. One would be to really understand the gravity of the action you just about took tonight – if for no other reason then to fix a resolve in your mind and soul to NEVER do anything like that for the wrong reason. That will take some time. But the other thing is to not be so totally down on your self. You made a mistake! Granted, it was a pretty big mistake, but we all make them. Then we'll just have to see if Durendal will accept you again.'

'Before I went to Hogwarts, I found a poem that was thought to have come from one of the first churches built in the new world. It was later discovered that a gentleman named Max Ehrmann had written it in the early 1900's. It called Desiderata – The Desired. I think you could benefit from some of the things it says:'

Desiderata

By max ehrmann

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible, without surrender, be on good terms with all persons.

Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons; they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your own career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs, for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals, and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself.

Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be cynical about love, for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is perennial as the grass.

Take kindly to the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.

Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life, keep peace in your soul.

With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world.

Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Max Ehrmann c.1920

These few words gave Harry a peaceful feeling. He felt like he knew what 'Ma' was trying to stress. He had to find peace with a Higher Power than himself, but also he had to 'Be Himself'. He had to discipline himself, but at the same time not be so 'serious' all the

time that he couldn't be a kid. But most important was the last line – 'Be cheerful. Strive to be happy'.

Coming out of his meditation, Harry spent the rest of the day (outside time – 10 days in flextime) reading on ethics and philosophy and talking with 'Ma' as to the difference between what is 'right' and what is 'wrong'.

One of the last things he did while in 'flextime' was to write a letter of apology to Professor Dumbledore:

September 12th, 1988

Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore
Order of Merlin - First Class,
Grand Sorcerer,
Chief Warlock of the Wizengamot,
Supreme Mugwump of the International Confederation of Wizards,
Headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Professor Dumbledore,

I wish to sincerely apologies for my behavior earlier this morning. It was completely uncalled for and unacceptable.

Not as an excuse, but as part of an explanation, there is a portion of 'Tom Riddles' also know as 'Voldemort' magical core that had been dormant in me since his attack at Godric's Hollow seven years ago. In the process of bringing down the wards around Privet Drive, I unwisely moved some of the last part of the energy to this portion of the core. This 'woke-up' that part of the core and I was unprepared for the consequences.

It was the sword Durendal that noticed my 'change of heart' and refused to be used in such an unrighteous act. In the process, Durendal was able to drain a good deal of the 'evil' part of that core's power and has erected a shield around it to prevent any further incident.

I ask your forgiveness for my actions and as penance from my actions, give you a wizard's oath that on my life, and on my magic, I will always fight on the side of light. So mote it be.

This should not be interpreted as 'burying the hatchet' with you.

I still hold you responsible for not following my parent's directions in accordance with their Will, and crippling a generation of witches and wizards by having blocks placed on their cores. May I recommend a prudently placed 'amoveo virtus compresco' (Remove power block) on most of the students at Hogwarts?

I apologies again for my actions of this morning.

Respectfully,

Lord-Baron Harry James Potter

Head of the House of Potter

Former resident of Number Four Privet Drive

Harry knew he was taking a chance telling Dumbledore so much about what had happened, but he did feel he needed an explanation why he had been attacked, and that he would not be attached again in unrighteousness. Harry didn't want to tell the Headmaster that he couldn't wield Durendal until he got all of the hatred out of his heart.

On his last 'day' in flextime Harry put forth his hand again to see if Durendal would let him remove it from the wall. He was rewarded with a positive response. Harry felt a great deal of joy and relief knowing that he had done everything he could to again enjoy the companionship of the 'Blade of Roland'.

Upon returning to chamber five and Potter Manor, Harry found Uncle Remus eating a light breakfast.

"Harry! I'm glad to see you back. Is everything alright?"

"Ya, things are much better now. Hold on a minute will you? Hedwig?" Harry's faithful white owl came into the room. "I have a letter I would like you to take to Professor Dumbledore. Don't wait for a reply, but if he places a tracing charm on you, come straight back here. If he doesn't, go to Lupin Manor and we'll be there in a little while."

Hedwig gave a short 'hoot' and bobbed her head to show she understood. Then held out her leg and let Harry attached the letter to it.

"Sassy?" Sassy was next to Harry in just moments. "Could you take Hedwig outside the house so she can fly to Hogwarts?"

"I would be glad to Master Harry, but why don't I take her a little closer?" Hedwig gave a 'hoot' of disgust, and turned her back up at the little elf.

"I think you just insulted Hedwig Sassy. No, just take her outside, she hasn't had as much exercise as she would like, and I don't use her to deliver many letters. This will be good for her."

Sassy nodded, then, asking Hedwig's forgiveness, took her outside to let her go. "If you hurry," Sassy said, "You can catch the last of the morning deliveries. Maybe even swipe a piece of bacon from the Headmasters plate."

Hedwig looked at Sassy, her eyes smiling. With a happy 'hoot', she was off, on her way to Hogwarts.

Hogwarts – Main Hall – Breakfast September 12th, 1988

The Headmaster was still stunned at the show of power a young eight-year-old boy had displayed just the day before. It reminded him of another young man who had attended Hogwarts nearly fifty years ago - Tom Marvolo Riddle. Had the Headmaster just made the same mistake with Harry as he had with Tom? Was all lost? But Harry held the Sword of Roland. Wouldn't that 'prevent' Harry from going 'Dark'?

The morning rush of owls had just landed in front of the students when, to everyone's surprise; a beautiful white owl came gliding through the windows and lit in front of the Headmaster. Holding its leg out, the Headmaster gently took the letter from off the owl. As soon as the letter was off, Hedwig started eating off of his plate, and drinking the pumpkin juice out of his goblet.

Professor McGonagall knew who Hedwig was, but didn't say anything to the Headmaster about that. Instead, she asked; "Aren't

the wards around Hogwarts designed to direct all owls addressed to you to your office, or the central mail center Headmaster?"

"Of course you are correct Professor McGonagall. The only exceptions to that rule are for former Headmasters, current staff, and ... Heads of a Founders House." This last part was almost said to himself. Professor Dumbledore was shaken out of his thoughts when he noticed Hedwig start to leave. Thinking quickly, he took out his wand and placed several tracking spells on the owl's back and tail. Hedwig, feeling the spells hit her, let out a disapproving squawk, turned back around on the Headmaster, and let her displeasure known by soiling his new purple robes.

Some of the students laughed at the owl's antics, as Hedwig continued to out of the hall and continued back to her master.

With a wave of his wand the stain was gone and the Headmaster continued looking at the letter he had just received. Opening it, Professor Dumbledore was quite shocked to see that the letter was from the little boy whom he had been worrying about, but the letter did not sound like it was a little boy talking. Someone far more mature had written this. But the magical signature was that of Harry and Harry's alone. 'Maybe he had someone dictate the letter to him.' Dumbledore thought. 'I have to find out who his guardian and advisers are. All Minerva and Filius will tell me is that they are not able to talk about the proceedings of the Inquiry, and that damned goblin oath is keeping the secrets safely tied up in their mind where I can't get to it.'

He was somewhat shocked at some of the information contained in the letter. He didn't know if he liked the idea of a piece of Voldemort connected to 'The-Boy-who-lived', but it did verify the identity of Voldemort. He was also glad that he had been right with regards to Durendal. As long as Harry was worthy to hold the sword, he would not go dark.

He was saddened somewhat with the fact that Harry was not 'burying the hatchet' with him. He also felt a pricking of the mind and heart when Harry mentioned the incident of the Will, and placing the block on the children's core but how was he going to reverse that item? The Ministry had been putting limits on most new infants since just after defeat of the Dark Wizard Grindelwald on his recommendation. Maybe he could do something with the students as they arrive each

year. But should he do it to everyone? What about those whose parents had been followers of Grindelwald and Voldemort? 'Do you condemn the child for the sins of the parents?'

"Albus are you alright?" Professor McGonagall asked quietly.

"What? Oh, yes thank you Minerva, I'm fine. I was thinking about this letter from Harry."

"Who is the letter from? Why didn't the wards stop that owl from delivering it to you here?" Professor Flitwick asked innocently. He too knew who Hedwig was and whom she belonged to. He just wanted to see if the Headmaster would give a correct response or a lie.

"The letter is from our Mr. Potter. I'm sorry, I can't disclose that information. And I really don't know how she got through the wards" was Dumbledore's reply. Well, at least it wasn't a lie, or half-truth. Maybe he was learning something after all.

Number Four Privet Drive – Chamber 5.

Ty the house elf came in the kitchen very excited just after Hedwig left.

"It's done Master Harry, Master Lupin, the new Manor is complete! We just need a few more hours to move in the furniture and we'll be already to show you your new Manor Master Lupin!"

You could tell Ty was very excited, but he had learned his lesson from Professor McGonagall regarding how to act.

"That's great Ty!" Harry said. "Is there anything you want us to do before coming over?"

"Oh no! Please just when you come, slide to these coordinates," and he handed them a little piece of parchment with the location on it.

"Why here? Why can't I apparate to my own home?" Remus asked.

"Please Master Remus, don't get mad at me. It's just that it's been so long since I've been able to show a finished project, that I'd like to make a big deal out of it." Ty was hanging his head.

"Oh, come on Uncle Remus! Ty has worked hard on this project. The least you can do is give him the pleasure of unveiling it for you."

"Okay, we'll come as soon as Hedwig gets back, or if she shows up there, then come and get us."

"Thank you Master Remus!" With that, Ty disappeared back to the Manor to finish-up the last minute details.

"Do you think Hedwig will really come back here first?" Harry asked.

"Yes, I do Harry. Albus knows you'll be moving soon, and he won't want to lose track of you if Hedwig is his only connection to you, he'll probable place every tracking charm know to man on her. Now why don't you get Sassy, and let's go down to chamber 8 and get in a few days worth of training while we're waiting for her to get back."

Remus figured they had about two hours left before Hedwig or Ty showed back up to get them. That would give them about two and a half days in flextime. During that time they reviewed all the basic information from the second year course work at Hogwarts. That included Arithmancy, Care of Magical Creatures, Charms, DADA, History of Magic, Potions, Transfiguration, and Wizard Etiquette. Harry also reviewed what he had read with regards to Rune casting and Rune Magic in general.

At noon of the third day in flextime Remus and Harry came out of chamber eight, just in time to feel Hedwig trip the ward around Number Four Privet Drive. "Sassy? Could you please go out back and bring Hedwig in? I want to see what tracking spells Professor Dumbledore placed on her." Harry said.

A few moments later, Hedwig was resting on Harry's arm looking very pleased with herself.

"That was a quick trip Hedwig, did you have any trouble?" Harry asked.

Hedwig just pulled herself up a little taller and gave a respected 'Hoot'.

"You didn't retaliate did you?"

Here Hedwig's eyes started to twinkle as she nipped Harry's fingers softly.

"Uncle Remus, you may want to contact Uncle Filius and Aunt Min to find out what really happened."

Remus just gave a little chuckle and quickly agreed to write the others.

"I feel four different spells here on Hedwig's back and tail. Can you take them off of her?"

"I'll see what I can do Harry." Remus answered. "Is there some way you can show me where they are?"

Harry thought about it for a moment, and then, held his hand over Hedwig's back area. Four different areas started to glow on her as if you were looking at her under a black light.

"Do you want me to just remove them, or should we make life a little more 'exciting' for the Headmaster?" Remus asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, I thought we could take three of these tracking spells and place them on each of the Dursley's and let the Headmaster try to figure out where you really went to."

"I think that's brilliant Uncle Remus! Can you do that?"

"Ya, I think I can. We'll first remove the strongest tracking spell and place it on one of the floor joints here in the cupboard so he won't be able to tell when we leave, then I will disillusion myself and Hedwig and place the remaining tracking spells on each of the 'family' members. It should only take about ten minutes tops. After that, we'll close up your trunk, shrink it down, and I'll let you 'slide' the rest of us to Lupin Manor."

"Great! Let's get it done then!"

True to his word, ten minutes later Remus showed back up with Hedwig, with a big smile on his face. Harry had been making sure

he had everything picked up and pack away by the time he got back. "Mission accomplished Harry, let's go! You're sure you don't need to say goodbye to anyone here do you?"

"Na, I've already said my goodbyes. Lets just get out of here. I want to see what Ty had done with the place."

Placing the trunk in his pocket, Hedwig on his shoulder, and holding on to Remus by the arm, Harry 'slid' everything and everyone to the coordinates given them by Ty. When they arrived there, they were surprised to see a large brush hedge in front of them, and what looked all of the bound house elves behind them.

Outside Lupin Manor

As soon as they appeared, the house elves began cheering and whistling. Ty appeared by their side and announced to the crowd: "We've finished the Manor and it's time to bring the new owner home!"

The crowd of elves began cheering even louder.

"Okay, now I know you're both excited to see your new Manor, but first lets give a had to all the house elves from the House of Potter and the House of Ravenclaw for all they had done to make this possible. Now, I know you want to see your new Manor that is currently behind this brush, so why don't we ask the grounds keeper to get rid of it for us. You know what to say, so why don't you say it with me: GROUNDS KEEPER, MOVE THAT BRUSH!"

The brush hedge vanished and Remus and Harry stood there dumb founded.

Before them stood the most stately, the most beautiful, the largest 'Manor' either of them had ever seen.

The Manor its self was sitting in the middle of a 200-acre plot of land. The front portion of the estate had a smooth lawn, edged by a traditional English garden. The pathway to the Manor was of large granite stones perfectly set together. The exterior of the Manor was also granite showing a four-story exterior.

"Do you like what you see on the outside? Why don't we go and take a look at the inside of your new Manor!" The excited elf said.

Coming through the double doors into the foyer, Remus and Harry were greeted by a familiar floor plan. Off to the right was a formal dinning room, to the left, office space and a den for Remus to work in. Directly in front of them was a spiral staircase that led up to the main living/sleeping quarters. Directly behind the staircase was the entrance to the Grand room that opened out to a veranda. All of the floors and stairs were of the finest marble from Italy. The glass and crystal were from the finest wizarding foundries in Venice.

Ty came in and ask Harry and Remus if they liked what they had seen so far. All either of them could do was look around and shack their heads 'Yes'. "Well, there's a lot more of the Manor to check out. Why don't you GO AND CHECK OUT THE REST OF YOUR MANOR!"

Remus and Harry broke out of their stupor and started running in every direction.

Just past the spiral staircase on the right was the kitchen, informal dining area, living room, and a breakfast / morning nook.

Off the left of the spiral staircase was one of the two Master bedroom suites.

Upstairs was a second Master bedroom suite, and eight additional bedrooms, each with their own walk in closets, and full bathrooms. There was also a galley that looked over the Grand room, a Library, main training area, and a muggle game room.

The top two floors were different from the original floor plan. The third floor had six additional bedrooms, with their own walk in closets, and full bathroom. The top floor was for physical training and magical dueling.

The Manor also had three floors underground. The first basement was a copy of chamber eight in Harry's trunk. And was ready for any rites or rituals Remus and Harry wanted to perform. It also had a wizards tent set up inside that was a miniature copy of the Manor where they could stay when they were in flextime.

The next basement was a fully stocked potions lab. It was currently set up to handle twenty workstations at a time.

The last sub-level was a copy of chamber number nine from the trunk. Just before going in, Ty looked at Remus and said: "Master Remus, I know that most of the time you are a kind, considerate master. But once a month, you have a problem with Lycanthrope. I have made a part of this chamber my secret project just for you. Go in and see if you like it.

Entering into the plain room, Remus saw two fully automated dummies. One shaped like a stag, the other like a large black dog.

"These dummies will respond only to your werewolf self, and are designed to be here to keep you company during the transformation. Also, this room has been warded so that a werewolf may enter this area, but may not come out of this area so as to keep everyone in the Manor safe.

Remus was speechless as he thanked Ty and gave Harry a big hug. "It will almost be like running with Prongs and Padfoot again. Thank you."

"Well we're not done yet Master Remus. Why don't you and Master Harry go and check out your new backyard!"

Harry and Remus made their way to the backyard through the Grand Room on the main floor. As soon as Harry saw what was out back, he let out a war cry and started running down to a brand new Quidditch field as quickly as he could. When he got to the field, he opened the equipment shed, and pulled out a brand new Cleansweep 7. Letting out another war cry, Harry jumped on the new broom and was off in a flash.

"Hey! Be careful out there! Minerva will kill me if anything happens to you while you're here!" Remus yelled. It didn't do any good; Harry was already too far away to hear him.

For the next hour Harry was flying the Cleansweep 7 as fast as he could. Remus brought out the box that held a quidditch set and decided to give Harry a try-out to see just how good he was.

First Remus took out the quaffle, and after getting Harry's attention; throw the ball up into the air. That was all it took as Harry came flying around as quickly as he could and caught the quaffle with his left arm, then, swinging back as sharply, rocketed down to the other end, transferred the quaffle to his right side and throw it with all his might through the middle ring of the goal. It was good! Before the quaffle could hit the ground, Harry zoomed around the back of the goal, grabbed the ball again and headed off to the other end of the field.

After about twenty minutes of that drill, Remus got Harry's attention again by holding up one of the beater bats. "Let's see how you are with a bludger. I'll only let one out this time." Remus said.

Harry dropped the quaffle, and grabbed the bat from Uncle Remus. Remus let one of the bludgers out. It shot up into the sky as if it was grateful to out of the box. Harry moved away from Remus so that the bludger wouldn't hit him by mistake. Remus had grabbed the other bat just in case it got close.

Harry proved to be just as accurate with the bat as he had been with the quaffle. At the end of another twenty minutes, Harry hit the bludger, and then started chasing after it. As the bludger started to slow down in preparation to turn back to the field of play, Harry caught up with it and grabbed it, tucking it tightly under his arm.

With the bat in his right hand, and the bludger on his left, Harry used legs to guide the broom back to Remus to hand the equipment back to him. Harry was looking very pleased with himself, and Remus was impressed beyond words as to how his all-but-godson was performing on the quidditch field. After Harry had given him the bludger and bat, Remus held his hand behind him. "Are you ready for this Harry?"

Harry looked at him questioningly. Remus brought his hand out from behind him: "the Golden Snitch," he said.

A large grin grew over Harry's face as he saw the small golden ball spread its wings.

Remus suddenly let the snitch go. It flew right past Harry who turned to follow it, but suddenly it was gone.

"Where did it go Uncle Remus?"

"You have to wait until the snitch shows its self to you, then you try to catch it. Try flying in a searching pattern while you wait for it."

Harry started by flying higher the usual so he could see more of the field at one time. He would not fly in a straight line, but weave back and forth, doubling back on himself just in case the snitch appeared behind him.

Finally after about five minutes, Harry caught a glimpse of something gold near the northern goal. Turning his Cleansweep 7 as hard as he could he put it into a power dive right towards the golden glitter. Sensing it was being chased, the snitch headed lower to the ground, still staying close to the goal post. Remus saw Harry starting to dive at something at the far end of the field and looked over. He just caught a glimpse of gold before it moved lower and behind the goal post. 'Harry's going to kill himself! There's no way he can avoid the post, grab the snitch, and pull up from that dive before hitting the ground!' "HARRY STOP!" Remus yelled. He started running to the far end of the field to be there when Harry crashed. He yelled again, but he knew Harry couldn't hear him. He was flying too fast for Remus to use his wand, so all he could do is pray that the ground was soft, and that he could put him back together again after he hit

Harry also noticed the snitch was hugging the goal post a little too close for his liking. 'It's probable going to make a sharp turn and brake up and away from the post when I get closer.' Harry thought to himself. 'I'll need to make a little course adjustment just in case. Not too much, but just enough give me some options rather than hitting the pole.'

Harry pushed his broom into a steeper dive so he could come out of the dive sooner, he also moved out away from his current line, which would have put him right into the pole. Sure enough, as Harry started to pull out of his dive, the snitch turned to the open field, and started to accelerate upward. Harry's line-of-flight was such that he was able to 'slingshot' around the goal pole without much loss of speed. Pulling the broom up, Harry soon caught up to and caught the snitch.

Letting out another victory yell, Harry held the struggling snitch in his hand as he pulled broom to a stop. Looking down where Uncle

Remus had been and didn't see him. Looking over the field, he found Remus on the ground near where he had just come around the goal post. Heading down as quickly as he could, Harry jumped off the broom and ran over to see if Remus was injured.

"Uncle Remus! Are you okay? I didn't see you when I came around the pole! I'm so sorry!"

Remus slowly raises his head to see that Harry's all right, with the snitch still in his hand.

"Yo... You did... didn't crash!" Remus stutters out. "I thought you were going to crash for sure!"

"Why should I crash? All I had to do is keep my eye on the snitch, make sure I didn't run into the goal pole, and not hit the ground. I thought the snitch would head out towards the open field, and probably shot up since it was so low. I just needed to adjust my dive to be able to take advantage of something like that if it happened."

Harry made it sound like it was no big deal.

"Well, let's put things up and go back to the Manor shall we?"

"Sure, Uncle Remus. Say, can we do that again, that was fun! I wish there were other people to play with."

"I know Harry, we can do this some more at a later time, but as far as having other kids over, that wouldn't be too safe right now. I hope you understand."

"I do Uncle Remus, besides, I think my studies will keep me busy for the most part."

"Good kid. Now, let's get back to the Manor and go exploring some more before we get down to work"

The next few days were spent getting use to the new Manor. Over the weekend, Professors Flitwick and McGonagall were brought up to see it and needless to say, were very impressed the things in general.

Professor Flitwick kept teaching Harry regarding the business he had, and how each of them was running. Harry also asked Professor Flitwick to work with the Goblins on setting orphanages on several of the Potter and Ravenclaw properties in areas where the need was greatest. A percentage of each profitable Potter companies would go to support the different orphanages. All would be welcome at the orphanages: regardless of if they came from a pure-blood, half-blood, squib or muggle-born family. Harry also wanted the children tested for a power block on their core. If one was found, it was to be removed.

Harry didn't want the public to know that he was the one running the orphanages, and so the Lawcraven Foundation was created.

End Chapter 15

Next – Chapter 16 – Letter from Hogwarts

Chapter 16 – Letter from Hogwarts

Reposted:

Lupin Manor – A few weekends later

Professor McGonagall was more than a little upset with all the magic Harry was learning at such a young age.

"Remus, he shouldn't be learning any of this until he gets to Hogwarts!" She exclaimed.

"But Aunt Min, I have to be ready to fight Him when he comes back." Harry explained.

"Fight 'Him'? Who's 'Him'?" she asked.

"Voldemort." Harry answered.

Professor McGonagall jumped at the mention of the name. "Don't be silly Harry. You've already destroyed him. He won't be coming back surely."

"He is not destroyed – just displaced. I know at least one part of his magical core is active because I've had it in me since the day he attacked my family. If he were really gone, the core would be gone also."

Professor McGonagall was shocked at that information. "We have to let Albus know at once! He'll know what to do!"

"Professor Dumbledore already knows about the situation. He's known since the 12th of September. There is nothing he can do with this – yet." Harry said. "Right now the core fragment is shielded, and no magic is being channeled to it. It's my hope that sometime within the next ten years, the fragment will be to a point where I can take care of it."

"Why can't you let the adults take care of Voldemort if he comes back?" Professor Flitwick asked.

"Because there is a prophecy that says I'm the only one who can. Didn't Professor Dumbledore tell you about it? My mum wrote about

it in one of her journals: 'The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ... Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies...' That's all the Headmaster would tell my parents and the Longbottom's. Apparently they have a son, Neville that was born one day before me, so the prophecy could have been about either one of us."

"So that's why Albus brought Sibyll to Hogwarts. She actually got one right! I remember him saying she had given an 'honest to goodness prophecy' just like her great, great, great grandmother use to do. He also said that he would be going to the Department of Mysteries to have the prophecy duplicated and stored."

"If the prophecy does regard you Harry, we should be able to go to the Department of Mysteries and listen to the full recording. I doubt I would be able to get away long enough during the school year, but we could do it during the summer. How does that sound?"

"That would be great Aunt Min! Could Uncle Remus and Uncle Filius could come with us?"

"I'm sure we can Harry. Now, let's talk about how your training is coming along..."

Harry and Remus finally convinced Professor McGonagall that he needed to train as much and as hard as he could until the time Voldemort returned. They explained how using flextime they could cover a maximum of 10 days studies in one eight hour period, so that they didn't spend all day down there.

Harry still hadn't told anyone about 'Potter in the Mind', where time was slowed down even further. If Harry were able to spend a full day (outside time) in 'Potter in the Mind', it would be the equivalent of 100 days. That was how Harry was able to study seven 'years' as a page, and another seven 'years' as a squire with Durendal teaching him the requirement to be a true Paladin.

Over the next three years, Harry would continue to learn and grow both mentally, physically and emotionally.

Department of Mysteries

During the first summer at Lupin Manor, Professor McGonagall took Harry and the others to the Department of Mysteries. All but Harry went in disguise so others could not tell whom they were. Professor Flitwick even wore a glamour that made him look six feet tall.

They were escorted to the Hall of Prophecies by a faceless Unspeakable. When they turned down a row of shelves holding hundreds of glowing orbs. The Unspeakable stopped in the middle of the row, and pointed to something on one of the upper rows.

Carefully Harry reached up and pulled down one of the small flasks that had his name on it. After the Unspeakable had cast a privacy dome around them, Harry opened the flask and watched as a spectral image of Sibyll Trelawney ascended out of the flask and began stating the prophecy:

The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord approaches ...
Born to those who have thrice defied him, born as the seventh month dies ...
And the Dark Lord will mark him as his equal, but he will have power the Dark Lord knows not ...
And either must die at the hand of the other for neither can live while the other survives ...
The one with the power to vanquish the Dark Lord will be born as the seventh month dies...

Everyone stood still for several minutes. No one knew what to say. If this prophecy was about Harry, it meant he was the only person who could possibly 'vanquish' the Dark Lord.

Harry calmly placed the cap back on the flask then suddenly threw the flask on the floor as hard as he could. Everyone else jumped. The spectral image of Sibyll Trelawney again began to state the prophecy, but without energy from the flask to support the matrix, the image dissipated into the ether.

"WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING HARRY?" Remus yelled.

"This is so no one else can learn of the prophecy. Right now there are five, maybe six people in the world that know what was contained in that flask. I know my mind is occluded to where no one can get it from me. I will insist that each of you also learn how to prevent someone getting this information from your mind as well."

"I do have a question though; what does 'vanquish' mean exactly?"

It was Professor Flitwick that answered Harry. "It is to completely conquer or overcome someone in battle. To gain Mastery over or subdue them to where they can not be a threat again. Does that answer your question?"

"I think so for the most part. It would seem that if there is some way for me to beat Voldemort – without killing him – he has to be in a state where he would no longer be a threat to me or the Wizarding world."

"But what if he refuses to submit or admit defeat?" Harry asked.

Remus came over to Harry and placed a fatherly hand on his shoulder. "If he refuses to stand down Harry, there is only one thing that you can do. That is to send him on to the next great adventure and let him be judged there."

Harry lifted his face to look at Remus. "You mean kill him don't you? You want me to become a murderer just like him?"

This time it was Professor McGonagall that stepped forward to address Harry. "No Harry! You will never be 'just like him', or even like him. You hold the sword of Prince Roland, the great Paladin. In order for you to do that, your heart must be pure."

"Harry," she continued, "Since you've received this sword, have you read anything of the life of Roland? His last master?"

Harry shook his head 'yes'.

"I'm sure you will remember that Prince Roland's life was not an easy one. As the chief Paladin, he had to set an example to all and make decisions that affected the rest of the paladins and the people around them. He was involved in many battles to guard and defend King Charlemagne. Do you think he did all that without killing people? The only people he killed were those who were found worthy of death. Whose hearts were so dark that they were past feeling and past any point of redemption."

"When you face Voldemort, Durendal will be there to help you see if there is any good left in him and if he can be redeemed or if he must be dispatched to the next great adventure."

"I know you have already used the sword one time to judge the Headmaster and the intents of his heart. What would have happened if Durendal would have found him wanting? Would you have been able to kill him at that time?"

Harry hung his head. He had already this discussion with 'Ma' and the essences of Durendal and had come to realize just how just HOW lucky he had been.

He knew he was not ready to take on the role of a Paladin now, but he was much closer. But back during the time of the Board of Inquiry, there would have been no way that he would have been ready to pass judgment on someone.

What if he had struck the Headmaster down at that time? How would that have effected the mind of an eight year old boy? What would Remus, Professor McGonagall, and Flitwick's opinion of him be if he had done something like that? What would the Goblins think of him? To have had the 'leader of light' killed while in their jurisdiction? Surly a new war would have erupted and the wizarding and goblin world made weaker, easier for Voldemort to come in and take over.

The only thing that Harry could have hoped for is that Madame Bones or Auror Moody would have taken the Headmaster in for further questioning at the Ministry, or Ragnok and Stonehand would have taken him in for questioning by the Goblins.

Now though, the main question was how to safeguard the contents of the prophecy.

"Well, I will admit I was very lucky with the Headmaster at the Board of Inquiry. And I hope it is a very long time before I am placed in that type of situation again. Right now, however, I want to talk about safeguarding the contents of the prophecy. All of us need to learn how to block our minds so others can not find out the contents of the prophecy.

Remus and I can take you to a special chamber where time is slowed down greatly if you need time to study and practice. Either that, or agree to be obliterated."

Harry's voice and manner was very cold and 'matter-of-fact'. Each of them would agree to learn occlumency or be obliviated.

"I'm with you Harry, but you should know, that a werewolf's mind is naturally occluded due to the nature of the illness. However, I will learn more traditional occlumency since I hear it is a great aid in studying and learning." Remus announced.

"I already have the basics of occlumency learned. One does not work closely with the Headmaster year after year, and keep anything private if you do not learn how to shield your mind. However, I would be most interested in seeing how you have built your shield." Professor McGonagall said.

"I feel I am in way over my head," Professor Flitwick started, "I have tried to occlude my mind many times before, but I find the constant need of keeping the shields up bothersome. I honestly feel it would be better if I were obliviated."

"I understand how you feel Professor, Aunt Min, could you please obliviate Uncle Filius? Maybe just plant the memory in his mind that he came with us, but just stayed outside the Hall of Prophecies?"

"That shouldn't be too hard Harry. Are you sure about this Filius?"

"Yes Minerva, I think it's for the best. Just make sure you get the charm right." Professor Flitwick said with a smirk on his face

Lupin Manor

Over the course of the next few years, Remus had taught Harry and Sassy all seven years of Hogwarts lesson material.

In addition, Harry had gone through all of his fathers Auror training manuals, and his mothers Unspeakable training manuals. He had read nearly all the books in the Potter Library relating to his studies.

Remus would no longer duel with Harry 'for real', but would animate up to 10 training dummies – half at a senior auror level, the other half at a hit wizard level. It took quite a while, but Harry got to the point where it seemed he could do anything regardless of the situation. Some of this was due to the fact that Harry developed a very useful shield.

alere roboris – (Feed Core Shield). If Harry were getting weak during a battle, he could invoke this shield, which would in essences, take the power behind any spell cast against him, and 'block' or more correctly 'decompile' the spell, and channel the energy in the spell back into his core. It wouldn't work on any of the Unforgivable curses, but just about everything else would feed energy back into Harry's core. Of course Harry still had to be strong enough to put up the shield in the first place and hold it against what ever spell thrown against him. If he waited too long, the shield wouldn't be strong enough to decompile the spell, and it would come through and hit him.

It would seem that the effects from 'The Blessing of the Heir' continued to fade over time with no one to renew the charm. That and Harry's little stunt with the blood rune stones from earlier in the summer had cost him dearly with regards of the protection that Sirius and his mother had given him.

The only reason he could absorbed the energy of the spell into his core was because he had been use to receiving 'power transfers' since he was a young baby. His core was flexible enough to take a sudden influx of power – like the first time he tried drawing power from the blood rune shield around Privet Drive, and brought the whole shield down for a few moments.

But the most important thing Remus taught Harry over this three year period was; how to be a Marauder – and an animagus.

April, 1991 – Lupin Manor

Harry had been interested in becoming an animagus ever since he read about them in the Potter Family Library.

It seemed that the type of animal or animals you could change into were based on several factors: your raw magical power – the more power the larger the animal: your intellect – the smarter you were, the more complicated the animal could be: your moral compass – you could be something 'good', 'bad', or 'neutral' and your basic elemental – Earth, Wind, Fire, Water. Earth and Wind forms were very common. Fire forms were rare, and Water types were almost non-existent.

This is where the information in James' trunk proved to be priceless. It seems the real Arithmancy formulas are a closely guarded ministry secret. It was during a prank while the then Minister of Magic had come to inspect Hogwarts that Sirius was able to switch the Minister's valise, copy the information that was there (including the animagus formulas), and return it without the Minister or his guards knowing.

When the Marauders saw what they had, they immediately swore each other to secrecy that they would never 'tell' anyone the formulas. Everyone but Peter was smart enough to make a copy of the formulas for future generations of Marauders. They could not 'tell' them the formulas, but there wasn't anything to stop them from having the future Marauders 'read' and 'memorize' the formulas.

There were a series of Arithmancy formulas that you had to go through to find out the level and class of animal you would be compatible with.

Then there were other formulas you had to use to compute your basic elemental classification: orange for earth, white for wind, red for fire, and blue for water. The only problem with Harry, his results always came out 'Black'. What was the meaning of that?

What Harry decided to try is to put each of the elements into the next equation to see what his primary form would be for that element.

With the Earth element, the primary form came out as Chimera – Head of a lion, body of a goat, and tail of a serpent. Besides being very mean, and very hard to kill, their breath was described as a 'terrible blasts of burning flame'. All Harry had to worry about is having a block of lead shoved down his throat.

With the Wind element, the primary form came out as a Hippogriff – The result of mating a Griffin with a horse mare. They were said to have the head, wings and front feet of an eagle, and the body of a horse, but it was actually the head, wings and front feet of a Griffin. Very proud, strong animals, they were also known for their loyalty.

With the Fire element, the primary form was a Bennu– An Egyptian stork like creature that had all of the same characteristics as a phoenix – Carry large, heavy loads, use 'fire-travel', their song encourages the light wizards, while bringing fear and dread to the

hearts of the dark. It also had the ability to be re-born through fire. It is said that the first Bennu came from the soul of the Egyptian sun god Ra.

When Harry tried the Arithmancy equation with the Water element he was surprised that it too came up with a valid animagus form. The Hippocampus was a water creature with the head and front legs of a horse, and the tail of a serpent. It was said to be very swift and power. The Merpeople were said to breed and use them as steeds.

"Well Harry, that's quite impressive. Which one do you think you'll try first?" Remus asked.

Harry just sat at his desk looking at the different formulas. How could that be correct? No one had four different animagus figures based on each of the different elements! And that was just the beginning! There were other sets of equations where you would put in the animal type, and come up with the requirements for the witch or wizard to meet if they wanted to become that type of animal.

"Ah... Harry?"

"Sorry Remus, this is just a bit much to take in all at once. How many other people do you know of have an animal from more than one elemental group?"

"With the possible exception of Merlin... none. I'd say that was a very unique situation in the current wizarding world. So, which one do you think you'll try first?" Remus asked again.

"Well, I'd like to try the Bennu first since it seems to be related to a phoenix, but I have to get more information on it first, so I think I'll do the Hippogriff first. Then if I get the hang of things, I'll probably do the Chimera since I think I'll need a strong presence on the ground. By that time I should have enough information to try for the Bennu, and then the Hippocampus. I just don't know where there are large bodies of water to practice that form though."

"Just wait until you get to Hogwarts and see its lake! I'm sure the giant squid would share it with you, and the merpeople will be thrilled to see another Hippocampus down there. Who knows, they

might even set up a breeding schedule for you!" Remus said laughing.

"Gross Uncle Remus! Are you trying to get me sick! Don't even think that!" Harry shivered at the thought.

"Just had to get in my digs while I can Harry. You'll be going to Hogwarts this year, and I don't know how often I'll be able to see you there."

"I know Uncle Remus. I'm getting a little excited about it. I can't wait being with kids my own age – not that you and Aunt Min, and Uncle Filius aren't fun to be with, but, you know, after a while..." Harry said with a sad smile on his face.

"Kids your own age? What age would that be Harry? The almost eleven years-old that you are by the calendar, or the thirty-something you would be if you took into account all the time you spent in flextime?"

"I'm looking forward to meet other preteens that are wide-eyed and ready to learn magic at one of the greatest schools in the magical world. I'm looking forward to not being pressured in to getting up at 5:00 o'clock in the bloody AM to go out running, and fighting for what seems like days on end. I'm looking forward to just sitting back and reviewing a book I've already read five times to answer a series of questions some great teacher thinks will tax the mind of a first-year student. I'm looking forward to some peace and quiet – when ever I'm not pulling a prank."

"Oh, I don't think that will last for very long Harry. You're too much a man of action. You'll get bored soon and go looking for some trouble to get into before too long."

"We'll just have to see about that. Right now, I have some studying to do. Sassy! Could you please bring me all the books you can find about Hippogriff's and Chimera's please? Then if you and a few other elves could look for any information you can find on Bennu it would be great! Look all over the world, but I think you'll probable have most of your luck in Egypt and the area around there. If you need money, you know you can draw on the Potter family trust okay?"

"Okay Master Harry, I understand, I will use eleven other elves working in teams to make sure everything gets covered. How soon do you think you will need it?" Sassy asked.

"Well, I should be in the time chamber at least a week. That should give me time to read all the books and do the meditation I need to get the characteristics imprinted in my mind before I try a transformation. Don't worry Uncle Remus; I won't try the transformation by myself. I know too many things could go wrong, and if I don't have someone there to help me with the counter spell, I may be stuck in there as a Hippogriff forever."

"I will come out of the time chamber for every meal to give you an update on how things are going, and also in case Aunt Min happens to come by on the weekend. I hate keeping so much from her, but I'm just afraid she's a little too close to Professor Dumbledore."

"Well, I better get going, I've got a lot of reading ahead of me."

"Okay cub, good luck to you." Remus said as he gave Harry a hug.

"Now cut that out, I'm getting too old for hugs!" Harry struggled against Remus.

"Just wait, soon you'll just be craving hugs!"

"Ya, maybe, but not from you!" Harry turns, and ran away laughing before Remus can respond.

Headmaster's office Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

"... 28, 29, 30, 31. I think this is the smallest class we've ever had Minerva. I can only hope that the class size starts growing in a few years." Professor Dumbledore was getting ready to send out the invitations for the class of 1991 to Hogwarts.

"I wouldn't worry Albus, remember, it was only ten years ago that young Harry Potter displaced He-How-Must-Not-be-Named. I'm sure if you checked St. Mungo's maternity records, you'll find the numbers will be moving up nicely over the next few years. Speaking of Mr. Potter, I don't seem to see his letter in this group. Albus, are you going to deliver his letter to him directly?" Professor Minerva McGonagall, deputy-headmistress of Hogwarts asked.

"Alas, no. I haven't seen or heard from our Mr. Potter since the 12th of September nearly three years ago when I met him at Privet Drive. I have had no correspondence with him or his guardians. None of my instruments have been able to locate him, and none of the school owls or Fawkes has been able to find him and aside from the odd sighting of Mr. Potter in Diagon Alley maybe once or twice during that period of time, I must therefore conclude that Mr. Potter has no intentions of coming to Hogwarts this year."

Professor McGonagall knew that school owls could reach Harry. She had been writing him ever since he moved into Lupin Manor over two and a half years ago. She had to be very careful how she addressed this problem. After all, she WAS Harry's Guardian, and she DID want him to go to Hogwarts. There must have been something other problem.

"That's preposterous Headmaster! You know as well as I do that Mr. Potter's name has been on the rolls of Hogwarts since he was born! James and Lily even set up a trust fund for him to pay for his schooling."

"How would you know this Minerva?" Professor Dumbledore asked as he looked over the top of his half moon glasses.

"I happened to visit Lily when she was at Godric's Hollow after she had come home with Harry to talk about his education." She said. It wasn't a total lie. She had visited Lily, and they had talked about his education. Lily just didn't mention anything about a trust fund. That was something she found out after she became Harry's guardian. But if the Headmaster was going to use half-truths, then so would she.

"Tell me Headmaster, just how many owls did you send to Harry over the last two and a half years?"

"Well, none directly. I thought it would be more appropriate to address them to his guardian."

"And just how many owls did you attempt to send to his guardians then Albus?"

"It doesn't matter how many owls I sent to his guardians. The fact of the matter is they have not seen fit to contact me with regards to their wishes regarding Harry's education in that period of time. I must therefore conclude that they have made other arrangements for his education!" The Headmaster was getting a little annoyed by his deputy's questioning his handling of Mr. Harry Potter.

"Is that a fact Headmaster?" Professor McGonagall was getting annoyed at the Headmaster's handling of this situation also. "Tell me, how many of these other students or their guardians have personally contacted you about the educational arrangements of their children? Certainly none of the muggle born student's or their parents, and I don't recall any of the purebloods sending a letter stating that their little children would be coming here have they?"

"Are you still upset with Mr. Potter calling that Board of Inquiry three years ago? Oh, good grief man! Grow up! He was just an eight-year-old boy that you had seriously wronged! No one outside of that room has any idea what happened in there, and if you're big enough to admit it, you brought that all on your own head by not following James and Lily's Will. You cannot take your grudges out on a little boy for something YOU did! That's not the great Albus Dumbledore that I know! Now tell me Albus, what is really going on?"

"Alright! I'll admit it hurt me greatly when I was stripped of my powers and control over Mr. Potter three years ago, but that is not all. You'll remember that one of the areas of probation was that I could not be a trustee or executor in any further business dealing with Gringotts? That one statement has forced me to have to turn down several request from some very powerful families that would have been very beneficial for all persons concerned."

"Beneficial to all persons concerned'? Isn't that just another way of saying 'it would have put more coin in my pocket?'" Professor McGonagall was just about ready to start spitting nails at the Headmaster.

"I suggest you go over to your pensive and take another look at the Board of Inquiry. None of that was young Mr. Potter's fault! All of that was of your own doing! Now I'm going to my office to draft an admissions letter to Mr. Potter, and I suggest after you review the Board of Inquiry in the pensive, you write a real letter to Harry's guardian. I will be back shortly to mail it and ALL of the admission

letters and the letter to his guardians. AM I MAKING MYSELF CLEAR HEADMASTER?"

"Yes, yes quite clear Minerva, there's no need to shout."

"Then get over to that pensive to remind yourself just what happened, and then get that letter written to Harry's guardian's. I'll be back in twenty minutes to pick it up!"

Professor McGonagall got up out of the chair, headed out of the Headmaster's office, and slammed the door shut on the way out.

"I do believe I have some memories to review..." Professor Dumbledore said to himself.

Lupin Manor – July 24th, 1991

Harry had been working hard the last few weeks. In that period of time, he had completed his animagus training as a Hippogriff and a Chimera. The information on the Benu was very hard to obtain, but his faithful elves had retrieved text not only from Egypt, but also from Turkey and surprisingly China.

Harry was having a great time looking at, and learning all the new languages. He made extensive use of the translation spell on the 'knowledge sphere' to translate the foreign language texts into English. When this was done, Harry would then use a Quick Quote Quill to transcribe the book into English to be placed into the Potter Library.

Harry had been meditating on his last primary form – the Hippocampus, when he came out of the time chamber for lunch.

"Mail call Harry!" Remus said as he came into the kitchen area.

"Anything from Aunt Min?" Harry asked, sitting down and picking up a sandwich.

"In a manner of speaking, yes." Remus said with a smile on his face. Remus then handed Harry a heavy parchment letter written in green ink.

"IT CAME!" Harry exclaimed, "MY HOGWARTS LETTER! IT CAME!"

Harry grabbed the letter and started jumping up and down, and dancing around the kitchen like a kid on Christmas day who just got everything on his wish list.

Remus couldn't help but laugh at the sight of his all-but-godson acting like an eleven year-old child.

"Well, you going to jump around all day, or are you going to read it?" Remus asked.

Settling down, Harry returned to the table and gently opened his letter:

HOGWARTS SCHOOL
of WITCHCRAFT and WIZARDRY

Headmaster: Albus Dumbledore
(Order of Merlin, First class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock,
Supreme Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)

Dear Mr. Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have been accepted at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment.

Term begins September 1. We await your owl by no later than July 31.

Yours sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall,

Deputy Headmistress

In a hand written note on the bottom of the letter, Aunt Min had included the following.

'I'm sure your parents would be very proud of you and all the hard work you have put in to get to where you are. You should know the

Headmaster did not want to send this letter out. He tried to tell me that since your 'guardians' had not attempted to get in touch with him, they must have made other arrangements for your training. I think he is still upset at you for what happened at Gringotts. I made sure that it was pointed out to him that what happened at Gringotts was NOT your fault, but his own.'

'I have set aside July 31st to take you to Diagon Alley for you to pick-up anything you do not already have. I hope you understand if I going covertly, I do not want Albus to know who your guardian is... yet.'

'But never doubt my love for you as if you were one of my own.'

'Love, Aunt Min'

Harry didn't know how he should feel. On the one hand he was very upset that the Headmaster would be holding a grudge against him like some little child. On the other hand to hear someone say that they loved him in writing, gave him a strange warm feeling inside. Harry was looking forward to being with his Aunt Min on his birthday.

July 31, Diagon Alley

As Harry and Minerva walked down Diagon Alley, Harry was taken back at the number of people that were there that day. He had been to Diagon Alley before with Remus, but they always tried to arrange their time there when there would be a minimum of people around for several reasons, not the least of which was Harry's famous scare.

"Come on Harry, I think all you really need is a set of school robes, your pointed hat, and a new set of books. Let's go to Gringotts first and get what money you'll need for your supplies and the school year."

Walking to the bank, Harry noticed a group of boys gathered around the Quidditch supply store looking at the new Nimbus 2000. He just smiled at the excited group of young men. He knew that it was the flier, as well as the broom, that made a winning pair.

Arriving at Gringotts, Professor McGonagall held back a little. "Oh, my word, it's Hagrid! He many not recognize me in my appearance,

but as soon as I move or say anything he'll know who I am, and I'm afraid he'll tell the Headmaster."

"Hagrid? Rubeus Hagrid? Keeper of the Keys and all that rot of Hogwarts?"

"Yes Harry. How did you know?"

"My Mum wrote quite a bit about him in one of her journals. Said that I should get to know him once I got to Hogwarts. Maybe I can solve our problem... Wait here for just a moment okay Aunt Min?"

"Okay Harry, but don't get into any trouble."

"Don't worry."

Harry walked right up to the side of the large man and cleared his throat. "Ah, excuse me sir? But would your name happen to be Hagrid, Rubeus Hagrid? Keeper of the keys and groundskeeper at Hogwarts?"

Hagrid was a little surprised that someone would be talking to him. Looking down he started to answer: "Why yes I am, and who might you b... Oh bless my soul! Harry? Is that you?"

"Yes sir. I came to Diagon Alley today with my guardian," pointing back to where Minerva stood, "to get my supplies for Hogwarts today. I read about you in my Mum's journal about how you were one of her few friends when she started at Hogwarts and told me to get to know you as soon as I got to school. I hope you don't mind me getting started a little early."

Hagrid laughed hearty. Everyone in the bank to look at him, and then quickly looked away. "Your mum was one of the finest people I ever met. She did more for me, then I could every say. She says I was one of her few friends? The truth of the matter was she was one of my only friends. She was one of the only people – other then the other staff members that would come and visit me. She helped me so much in learning more magic. She was quite a young lady." Harry could see an unshed tear in Hagrid's eyes.

"Hagrid? I know this isn't really fair, but could I ride down to the vaults with you? I'd like to get to know you a little bit better before getting to school."

Hagrid looked proud enough to burst right there on the spot. "Of course you can Harry. I haven't seen you since that night I took you from..." Hagrid's whole expression fell when he remembered that first time he had seen Harry.

Seeing his discomfort, Harry rested his hand on his new friend's arm and said: "That's okay Hagrid, you did what you were asked to do, and I don't hold that against you. In fact, it shows how much trust other persons put in you to take care of such a delicate situation."

Hagrid blushed at Harry's praise. At that time they reached the front of the teller line.

"Morning, we've come to take some money from Mr. Harry Potter's vault." Hagrid announced as they came up to the teller.

"You better have Lord Potter's permission to say something like that." The goblin said looking fiercely at Hagrid.

Harry stepped out from behind Hagrid and said "Don't worry Sharphit, he does."

"Oh, Lord Potter! I'm sorry, I didn't see you there."

"Forget about it. Here's my key."

"Oh, and I have a letter from Professor Dumbledore. It's about you-know-what in vault seven hundred thirteen." Hagrid had whispered the last part of his message to the goblin, who looked at the letter and then returned it back to Hagrid."

"Very well, Griphook! Could you please take Lord Potter and Mr. Hagrid down to their vaults?"

"Certainly Sharphit, Lord Potter, Mr. Hagrid? This way please. Good morning Lord Potter, it is good to see you again."

"You too Griphook how is your father?"

"He is doing quite well thank you. Your last visit here was quite profitable for him."

"I'm glad to hear that Griphook, please give him my regards."

"Certainly Lord Potter, now, it you and Mr. Hagrid would be as kind as to get into the cart."

Harry got right in. It took Hagrid a little longer to get his frame into the cart.

"Lord Potter? That has a nice ring to it Harry. How long have you been Head of your family's House?"

"About three years now. It's a lot of work. I'm glad I have some good advisers and guardians to help me with it."

As the cart started to rocket down the tracks, Harry turned to Hagrid and asked: "What's this 'you-know-what' in vault seven hundred thirteen?"

"Can't tell ya Harry, that's Hogwarts business. Dumbledore trust me. It's worth more then my job to tell ya. Great man Dumbledore."

Harry had to bite is tongue not to say something about Professor Dumbledore. "That's alright Hagrid I wouldn't want to get you in trouble with Professor Dumbledore."

The cart came to a halt, and Harry passed his key to Griphook, who quickly unlocked the vault. Harry stepped out of the cart, picked up a few bags with a mix of Galleons, Sickles, and Knuts, before jumping back into the cart.

"Do ya think we could go a little slower to the next stop?"

"One speed only." Griphook said, with a little smile on his face.

When they got to vault seven hundred thirteen, Griphook got out of the cart and warned everyone else to stand back. Running his finger down the center of the door, Harry could hear a series of gears, locks, and deadbolts turn and slide back as he feels the presence of a magical 'vacuum cleaner' activate that would have 'sucked in' any wizard that would have been standing on the platform.

When the door opened, Hagrid went in and picked up a grubby little package, and put it in his coat. "Best not be telling anyone about that okay Harry?"

Harry shook his head 'Okay', and Hagrid got back into the cart. Harry could feel the power radiating off the little package. It was far more intense than anything he had felt before including the blood rune stones.

As they got back up to the bank lobby, Hagrid said: "Well, it is good to know that you're all right Harry. I know the Headmaster has been worried something terrible over how you were being brought up, but now I can just tell him that you're alright, and you'll be at Hogwarts in just over a month now."

"Ya that will be great Hagrid." Harry said as he bite his tongue again. "I hope you'll let me come and visit you when I get to Hogwarts?"

"Anytime Harry, anytime. I've got a few stories I could sure tell you about your mum and dad, but mostly about your mum."

"I'd like that a lot Hagrid, thanks." Harry held up his hand for Hagrid to shake it.

Hagrid looked at the hand, and ignoring it, took Harry into a big bear-hug, patting him on the back. "Friends don't shake hands Harry, they hug."

Harry tried to return the hug. "Thanks Hagrid." This time there were tears in Harry's eyes.

Walking back up to where Professor McGonagall was standing Hagrid looked up and even though he couldn't see her face, said with a strong voice. "You've done a fine job of raising young Harry here, and for that I thank you." Hagrid held out his hand, but wisely, Professor McGonagall didn't accept it. She knew if she did, she would be found out, and the Headmaster would know. After an acquired moment, Hagrid removed his hand, and turned to Harry and said: "Well, then, ah, I guess I will be seeing you on the first of September then right?"

"Right" Harry said.

"Right then, I'll be seeing ya Harry." And with that Hagrid walked out the bank door.

Professor McGonagall waited a few moments to make sure Hagrid had gone before she put up a privacy dome and said anything to Harry. "Well, what did you think of Hagrid Harry?"

"I can see why my mum would have really liked him. But he seems to think that the Headmaster can do no wrong, and when you're that big, not many people are going to argue with you." He said with a slight smile.

"Yes, Hagrid is rather fond of the Headmaster. He's the one that got him his job at Hogwarts after he was expelled for being accused of something he did not do."

"Come on Harry, you still need to get your robes while I get you a new set of books for your class."

Aunt Min took Harry to 'Madam Malkin's Robes for All Occasions'. As they entered Madam Malkin herself met them. "Hogwarts dear?" she asked. "I've got another one in the back here just finishing up. Come on, up you go."

Harry found himself standing on a stool with a very pale and a pointy face.

"Hello", said the boy, "Hogwarts, too?"

"Yes," said Harry.

The boy had a huge arrogance streak in his manner Harry could 'hear' him talking down to him in his tone of voice and an aura that defiantly was not 'clean'

"My father's next door buying my books and mother's up the street looking at wands," said the boy. "Do you know what house you'll be sorted into? I'm sure I'll be going to the great house of Slytherin. If I were to be sorted in to Hufflepuff I think I'd have to kill myself. Ha, ha, ha, ha"

Yep, this kid was definitely a stuck-up creep. But what did that poem say? '...listen to others, even to the dull and the ignorant, they too have their story.' But then it also said: 'Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.' Harry was pretty sure this kid fell into this category. He was brought out of his thoughts when he saw Hagrid walk down the street, outside the store.

"I say, look at that man!" The pale boy suddenly said.

"Huh, Oh, that's Hagrid. He works at Hogwarts."

"Hagrid, I've heard of him. Isn't he some kind of servant?"

"He's keeper of the keys and groundskeeper."

"Ah yes, the savage."

"I think he's brilliant from what I've heard."

"You do? Well, I think he is a clear example of the type of people who should not be permitted in wizarding world – half-breed. At least he's not a mud-blood. They don't have any place in our world! Don't you agree? I can tell you're a pure-blood aren't you?"

Harry stood there dumbfounded. He didn't know if he should laugh in the boy's face, or knock it off his head. Fortunately he didn't have to answer since the person working on the pale boy's robe told him she was through.

"Well, I guess I'll see you on the Hogwarts Express then. By the way, my name's Draco, Draco Malfoy."

"Good for you Malfoy, I'm sure I'll see you there." Harry really didn't like this boy.

Harry quickly got his robes and supplies and headed back to Lupin Manor with Professor McGonagall.

Headmaster's office – Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

As soon as Hagrid returned to Hogwarts from Diagon Alley he headed straight to Professor Dumbledore's office.

"Headmaster! Headmaster! I saw him! I saw him! In Gringotts! He came right up to me and told me how he had read about me in some of his mum's journals!" Hagrid was defiantly excited.

"Slow down Hagrid, slow down. Now, whom did you see at Gringotts?" The Professor asked with a twinkle in his eye. "Lemon drop?"

"No thank ya sir. Harry Potter sir! He came right up to me and asked if I was Rubeus Hagrid and told me how his mum had written in her journals about me! We rode down to the caverns together and talked about him coming here to Hogwarts! He seems quite excited to be able to come here. I told him he could come and visit me when he had a free moment. I tell ya Professor, he may look like James, but his eyes, and his heart are just like Lily's."

The twinkle went out of the Headmaster's eyes as soon as he heard the words 'Harry Potter'. He turned his body so Hagrid couldn't see. He was craving any information he could get on young Mr. Potter.

"Tell me, Hagrid, how did Mr. Potter seem to be to you? Was he well cared for? Well mannered? What type of aura did he exhibit? Can you tell me anything about his guardians."

"Well... he looked very well cared for. Well feed, clothed, very well mannered. I couldn't tell you about any aura, I didn't notice any. One thing that was strange though was that it seemed like he knew every goblin in the bank, and they all knew him. They would call him 'Lord Potter'. I guess that would be right if he was the head of the house of Potter."

"As far as the guardians, ya, I did meet one of them, but I couldn't see their face, and when I offered to shake hands, they refused. They looked kind of small; maybe they thought I would break their hand or something."

"Oh, before I forget..." Hagrid started searching through his coat pockets before he took out the grubby sack that he had taken from vault seven hundred thirteen.

"Thank you Hagrid, you have been most helpful today. When young Harry gets here, please keep an eye on him, and let me know if there are any problems."

"Sure enough Professor Dumbledore, but I'm sure you won't have any trouble with him."

'I hope not Hagrid, for all of our sakes, I surly hope not.' Professor Dumbledore thought.

Lupin Manor

Returning home, Harry quickly sorted out everything that he and Professor McGonagall had purchased at Diagon Alley. Harry put the things he needed into his multi-chambered trunk.

He told Remus and Professor McGonagall about his talk with Hagrid, and how he was glad to meet someone else who knew he parents. He also told them about the snotty pale boy in the robe shop – Draco Malfoy.

"That sounds just like what Lucius Malfoy's son would say." Professor McGonagall stated.

"Harry, remember the followers of Voldemort?" Remus started.

"Ya, Death-eaters right?"

"That's right Harry. It was thought that Lucius was in Voldemort's 'inner circle' before you removed him from power. Lucius had lots of money and spread it around before his trial. He claimed he had been held under an Imperius curse and that he couldn't help doing all the bad things he did. To say the least, he was found not guilty and escaped doing any jail time in Azkaban."

"The Malfoy's are all about blood purity. They feel that only pure-bloods should be taught magic, and that all others should be 'eliminated'."

"That doesn't make any sense Uncle Remus." Harry said. "If you have a closed society like that, I don't care how diverse they begin, if you don't allow any 'new stock' from time to time sooner or later your gene pool will no longer be viable. You'll have cousins marrying cousins! Soon you would breed the magic right out of the population, and they would get to the point where the whole society would become sterile."

"Do I want to know where you read that from Harry?"

"Don't worry Aunt Minerva. That came mostly from some of my muggle reading that I would do for a change of pace from all the boring magical books that were in the Potter library."

"Alright then. Oh my, look at the time! I have to get back to Hogwarts before the Headmaster suspects anything." She walked over and gave Harry a sweet hug and a kiss before heading to the fireplace. Turning around just before going in, she said: "Harry, know that I love you, and can't wait until you come to Hogwarts. You behave and I'll see you in a month." Then she threw in the floo powder, and called out "Professor McGonagall's office Hogwarts," and was gone.

"I do miss having a woman around the house." Remus said.

"Me too" said Harry.

Hogwarts – Main Hall

It was just a few days until the students would be showing up at Hogwarts again. All of the instructors had now reported in at the school. They were finishing up lesson plans, and were now getting use to the responsibilities they would be assuming in just a few days.

The Headmaster came in after breakfast had started and looked quite unkempt and confused. His Deputy Headmistress was keen to the fact that he had missed the last few days of preparation. In fact, this was the first time she had seen the Headmaster in some time.

"Professor Dumbledore are you alright?" She asked.

"Ah, Minerva, sorry, I just seem to be a little under the weather lately. Ever since Hagrid came back from Diagon Alley stating he had seen our young Mr. Potter I have had a very uneasy feeling." He sat down and started picking at the food on his plate.

"What would you be feeling uneasy about? I thought Hagrid said Harry looked fine."

"Oh yes, yes, Harry looked fine, it's the guardian that they have placed him with that has me concerned. Did I tell you they refused to shake Hagrid's hand when he offered it to him?"

"Really? I wonder why? Maybe they were afraid Hagrid would break their hand if they shook it."

"No, no, that can't be it I think the goblins have placed our Mr. Potter with some Death-eaters."

Professor Dumbledore was serious when he said it. Professor McGonagall dropped her fork and just looked at him in shock.

"And just how did you come to this conclusion Headmaster?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"Isn't it... Isn't it clear? They have made no attempt to contact me regarding Harry, they refuse to shake Hagrid's hand, and they have kept Mr. Potter almost completely out of the wizarding world. What other conclusion could it be? They are obviously a dark family that does not want to deal with any part of the light! I must stop them and save Harry!"

Minerva was quite beside herself. Being called 'dark' was one thing, but trying to 'save' Harry was not a good idea. She got up and placed her hand on his shoulder.

"Albus, I think you need to come with me for a few minutes. You haven't had any sleep for quite some time, and I can tell you haven't been taking care of your self. You need to see Madame Pomfrey to get some rest before the children come here. Mr. Potter will be here in just a few days, then you will have him here for the next nine months, but I would advise you not to try to 'save' him when he first shows up. Get to know the young man first, and see how he is. Remember if he is holding the sword of Roland, there is a very good chance that he is not dark or evil. Now, come on, let's go see Madame Pomfrey."

"Of course Minerva, of course you are correct. I do need my strength before the children show up." Professor Dumbledore slowly got up and allowed his friend to help him up to the hospital wing. The other teachers were confused at the current condition of their Headmaster

– all except one. Could he use the weakened Headmaster to get what he wanted? Only time would tell.

Lupin Manor – September 1st Early Morning

"Come on Harry your going to be late to the Hogwarts Express." Remus yelled.

"Oh, come on now Uncle Remus, I'm so close to getting it. Can't we go down to the lake and try it just one more time? I'm sure I can do it this time?"

"Okay, but only if you have your trunk packed and ready to go and with you."

"Great! Here, let me 'slide' us down to the lake."

Before Remus even has a chance to say anything, Harry grabs his arm, and all at once, they are standing on a lake in the southern part of the Lupin estate.

"Okay Harry, now remember, you have to accept the personality and characteristic of the Hippocampus. Now let's see it."

Harry wasn't listening to his Uncle Remus. He was running full speed down to the water. Entering the water, he allowed the Hippocampus persona take complete control. As he dove into the water, he felt the change take place. His head stretched, and he grew a long mane down his neck. His arms became powerful front legs with webbed hooves. His legs became a long powerful serpents tail that he could use to propel him through the water. Then, the moment of truth came. He was completely under water now. He opened his mouth to take in his first 'breath'... SUCCESS! He was breathing under water! He felt complete! He headed for the surface of the water as fast as he could swim. As he broke the surface he keep going up and up. He felt like shouting for joy. Which came out sounding more like a horse whinnying.

Harry could see Remus on the shoreline looking just dumbfounded. As Harry reached the peak of his jump, he twisted to the side, and was surprised to see the height of his jump. Turning further, he plummeted back down into the lake.

Harry knew he should be getting back out of the lake, but he just had to swim around for another fifteen minutes.

Coming out of the lake, Harry turned back into himself and started jumping up and down. "I did it, I did it, I did it, I did it! All four before going to Hogwarts! Come on Uncle Remus! Let's get going to the train station!"

With a thought, Harry's cloths where clean and dry. He ran up to Uncle Remus, and 'slid' them both to an abandoned street next to Kings Cross.

End Chapter 16

Chapter 17 – Taking a ride on the Hogwarts Express.

Chapter 17 – Taking a ride on the Hogwarts Express

Reposted:

Sliding to a stop outside the train station at Kings Cross, Harry had a hard time concentrating with the task at hand – Getting to the Platform at nine and three quarters.

Remus could still hear Harry saying under his breath 'I did it! I did it! I did it!' which made him want to laugh at his young friend. What Harry had accomplished was an extraordinary feat for anyone. Most wizards aren't willing to go through the time and effort to discover their animagus form. But Harry not only had more than one form, he was successful in mastering four different forms based on each of the four different elements, Fire, Water, Earth, and Air. The last wizard to do anything like that may have been Merlin, but Remus didn't know that for sure.

"Okay fish boy, let's get moving before we miss your train." Remus joked.

"Fish boy? Watch it fur ball or you may find yourself facing a hopping mad Hippogriff on your tail." Harry responded.

"Na, that overgrown turkey probable couldn't hurt a fly."

"Would you like taking a few minutes and finding out?"

Laughing Remus held up his hands and said, "Not now Harry, we still have to get you on that train, now take out that trunk, enlarge it, put a feather-weight charm on it, and let's get moving."

"Okay Uncle Remus, you take all the fun out of being teased."

Walking quickly, they soon find themselves at the main terminal at Kings Cross.

"Okay, let's get a trolley for you and get heading down to the platform."

Harry did as he was told. He was in a little shock being at a place where there were so many people. Even Diagon Alley wasn't this crowded! Harry was staying very close to Uncle Remus. Thinking

about it, this would be his first time away from Lupin Manor in almost three years. It wasn't like he didn't know anybody – Aunt Min and Uncle Filius would be there – along with Professor Dumbledore and that Malfoy boy.

'Well, I guess you take the good with the bad.' Harry thought to himself.

'Don't forget son, I'll be there too.' 'Ma' said.

'As will I young master.' Durendal replied.

'I know, I don't mean to minimize what you guys mean to me, but you know what I mean. This is the first time since before I've been at Lupin Manor that I will be away from Remus. I do not look forward to leaving him.'

'I know what you mean son. Remus is a good friend, surrogate father and godfather. I think this is as hard on him as it is on you, he just hides it better.'

"Hey Remus, are you going to miss me while I'm at Hogwarts?" Harry asked.

Remus paused for a moment, then, put his hand on Harry's shoulder. "More than you know cub, more than you'll know."

Entering the main lobby, Harry pick up a trolley and placed his trunk on it. As he and Remus made their way down to the platform area, Harry was looking at all the people who were there getting on different trains or making connection to different routes. He noticed that most of the people there muggle, but every once in a while, he would pick up a magical signature from a person or group of people, mostly with young children like himself. 'Those must be other kids on their way to Hogwarts like me.' He thought. 'I'll have to get to know some of them better when I get there.'

Harry was watching the platform numbers as they were walking. ...Eight, Nine ... Ten. "Ah, Uncle Remus, just where exactly is platform nine and three quarters?"

Remus smiled for a moment. "Stretch your senses Harry. Tell me what you feel."

Harry stopped by his trolley, took a few deep breaths to 'center' himself, cleared his mind, and then closed his eyes and pushed his magic out so he could 'feel' what was around him.

"There are about 45 muggles in the area moving in different directions. There are 13 magical beings in the area all headed in this direction. Most of the auras are 'clean', but there are a few that are darker than I like, and two are absolutely black! ...Wait a minute... One of the Pillars is giving off a magical signature – there's a 'Notice-Me-Not' charm on it, as well as an anti-muggle charm, and a very strong glamour charm? What would that be for?" Harry asked.

"How else are you going to hide a gateway to a magical platform in the middle of a muggle train station?" Remus replied.

"Now, take your trolley, and just walk at a good pace towards the center of that column. I'll be right behind you."

Harry did as he was told, and when it was clear, walked quickly toward the center of the third column between platforms nine and ten. When he got to where the wall should be, he felt himself being pulled through a magical portal to platform nine and three quarters.

Harry walked out a ways further so Remus wouldn't bump into him. He stopped and looked around at the contents of the platform. Amazed at the diversity of magical people he saw there. And then there was the train – bright, shining, and looking like a proud steed on display ready to pull its charge of students to noble Hogwarts. It was almost surreal to Harry.

"Well, Harry, what do you think of the Hogwarts Express?" Remus said walking up to Harry's side.

"It looks fantastic Uncle Remus! And seeing all the different type of people! I'll say one thing about the wizarding community, they are a colorful lot!"

"Uncle Remus? There seems to be some muggles here on the platform. Is that normal?"

"Well, it would be if they had a magical child with them. I remember when your Grand's first brought your mum here the first time; they

looked like a couple of fish out of water. Probable only the second time they had ever seen magical people. What do you say about us going up and helping them out?"

"Sounds great! But it looks like there might be a little problem around them." Harry observed.

As Harry and Remus approached the muggles they saw a group of three very angry young boys around them, including one pale-faced blond boy, and two others that reminded Harry of Dudley in both size and mental capacity.

"... Just go back home mud-blood! You're not welcome here! You're nothing more than an abomination of nature – nothing but a freak!"

"Funny, I heard exactly the same thing for exactly the opposite reason for the first eight years of my life... Mr. Malfoy is it?" Harry said as he walked directly in between the muggles and the little pale boy. Harry started walking towards the boy and his group causing them to automatically backed away – shocked that someone would have the nerve to interrupt them. In the meantime, Remus took the muggle parents, and the young muggle-born witch, and quickly got them to the train.

"You! I should have known you were a blood-trader when you didn't give the proper respect to the name of 'Malfoy'!"

"Oh, I know all about the 'great' house of Malfoy, I just don't agree with your politics or your so-called principles. I believe it is a person's deeds not title, blood, or supposed social standing that are how they are to be judged. Respect is something that is earned not just given. I also believe that every person should have the opportunity to grow and develop in to the best person they can become. That also means that a person has the opportunity to fail at what they attempt, but the choice is theirs to make."

"You'll be sorry you ever got in my way!" Draco said he reached down as if he were going to draw his wand.

Harry looked over Draco's shoulder as if looking at someone. "I don't think you want to do that in front of an Auror." Harry said.

Draco and the other two boys turned around quickly to see if an Auror was behind them. When they did, Harry used his house elf magic to disappear, and went to go find Remus. When they turned back around, he was gone, and Draco still didn't know his name.

Harry found Remus and the others in the last car on the train. He 'slid' into the compartment, and then became visible again. Everyone in the room, except Remus, let out a little scream of surprise when they suddenly saw Harry.

"Oh, sorry about that, I forgot you're probable pretty new to magic."

"You've already met my all-but-godfather Remus Lupin. My name is Harry, Harry Potter."

"I've read about you! You're in all the books, I mean, like 'Modern Magical History' and 'The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts' and 'Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century'.

"I hope you didn't believe everything you read in there. None of those publications have talked to me about what happened, and I didn't give any of them permission to tell my story."

"Then why didn't you stop them? I thought once it went to press, the contents of a book had been checked, rechecked, and verified by at least two different sources!" said the bushy haired young witch. She looked devastated that something she had found in a book could possible be wrong.

"Let's just say some people can play fast and loose with limited facts and make it sound like the truth Miss..."

"Granger, Hermione Granger," she said holding out her hand, "and these are my parents, Dan and Emma Granger."

Harry shook her hand and then the hands of her parents. "I would like to apologies on behalf of the entire wizarding world for the myopic beliefs of certain bigots. The opinions expressed are their own, and do not reflect the opinions of the other magical people in this room."

Remus laughed, while the Granger's looked a Harry as if they were listening to the beginning of an informational commercial.

"I'm sorry Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Hermione; it's my fault Harry sounds like an ad on the television. I've let him stay up too late watching that contraption, since he won't be seeing it for then next nine months." Remus said. "Now do any of you have any questions regarding the wizarding world, and Hogwarts?"

Dan and Emma looked at each other as if there were a series of questions that they wanted to ask, but didn't know if they should.

"Well... Professor McGonagall was quite thorough when she explained the invitation letter Hermione received from Hogwarts, it's just..." Mrs. Granger fell quiet as if she were afraid or didn't know how to ask the next question.

"How could there be another complete culture here in Britain and no one notice?" Remus proposed.

"Well, that's part of it, but also, like that boy out there; there seems to be a great deal of 'separation' even within the wizarding world based on blood. Mr. Lupin, just what is a 'mud-blood'?"

Remus' face darkened at the term that had been used by Draco Malfoy and his group just moments ago. "It means 'dirty blood'. But it is meant as the most vulgar swear word possible. Some of the so-called 'Pure-blood' families feel that they are the only ones who should have the privilege of learning magic, that all other magical persons are beneath them and should be their servants, or just be eliminated."

"What do you mean 'eliminated'?" Mr. Granger asked.

"Just what it sounds like – killed, rubbed out, removed with extreme prejudice. Sorry to be blunt about it, but there are those who still hold to that point of view. Of course the Ministry of Magic does everything that it can to prevent that, and to educate masses to revise their opinion on the matter. Of course as long as you are at Hogwarts, or close to Harry that won't happen. Will it Harry?"

"No Uncle Remus it won't. I give you my word Mr. and Mrs. Granger; I will do everything in my power to keep your daughter safe."

"No offense Harry, I'm sure you're a fine young man, but just what can you do to protect our daughter that a full grown adult couldn't? No offense intended."

"None taken sir."

"You would be surprised at our little Harry here. He is quite competent when it comes to dueling and such. Let's put it this way, I won't duel against him anymore." Remus said.

"Do you have any other questions?"

"I've always wondered about the other type of magical creatures I might encounter at Hogwarts. I hope they're better than the goblins I met at the bank." Hermione said.

"Did you have problems at Gringotts?" Harry asked.

"Let's just say the goblin that 'helped' us I'm sure took advantage of us. I would have thought 500 pound sterling would have given us more than 80 of those gold coins." Mr. Granger said.

"Well maybe I can answer some of your question, and take care of your problems at Gringotts at the same time." Harry said. "Sassy!"

Sassy appeared next to Harry in her Potter house robes. "Yes Master Harry, did you forget something?" She said with a slight curtsy.

"No Sassy, I just wanted to introduce you to The Granger family: Dan, Emma, and their daughter Hermione. They were interested in meeting other magical beings. I also thought you could do me a favor, and see if Griphook is available for just a moment. I have something to discuss with him."

"Yes Master Harry, I will go and get Master Griphook presently." With that Sassy disappeared without a sound.

The Granger's were speechless. Before they could ask any questions, both Sassy and a goblin appeared back in the car.

"Good morning Lord-Barron Potter. How may I be of service to you today?" Griphook said with a bow.

"Good morning Griphook. I would like to introduce you to the Granger family. As you can tell, Mr. and Mrs. Granger are muggles, while their daughter, Hermione is a witch. It seems that when they were in Gringotts to have their money exchanged, someone took advantage of them. They were only given 80 Galleons for 500-pound sterling. Now it was my understanding that the normal exchange rate was one Galleon per five-pound sterling with a one Galleon handling fee per one hundred pounds. The fact that they were over charged fifteen Galleons more than what is allowed may speak well of some of your employees, but know that the Grangers are under my protection. Am I making myself clear?"

"Yes Lord-Barron, perfectly clear. If I could have your house elf help me, we should be able to correct the problem presently."

"Of course, Sassy, could you please take Griphook back to the bank and help him with what he needs?"

"Yes Master Harry." Sassy said with a slight smile. She loved seeing the goblins put in their place by a human.

Sassy returned shortly with the extra fifteen Galleons and gave them to Mr. Granger. "Here you go sir; Griphook has assured me that there will be no further problems with you at Gringotts and that all of the tellers have been advised that you are under Master Harry's protection. If you do have any problems, just ask for Griphook, and things will be worked out. Now master, if there is nothing else, I will be going back to your manor."

"Just a moment Sassy, I want to explain something to the Grangers, especially Hermione, since she seems to be full of questions."

"Sassy is my personal house elf. She and her family have been bound to the Potter house for many generations. Being bound to a house is not the same as being a slave, or being property, at least not to me. I believe all magical creatures have rights, and should be treated as an equal."

"Sassy, why don't you tell Hermione what happens to a house elf if they are unbound for too long."

Sassy looked excited thinking about the situation they had experienced just a few years ago.

"A house elf must bind to a home or location, family, witch, or wizard so that their own magic can be 'grounded'. Without the binding, a house elf will slowly lose control of their magic, and in turn lose control of their mind. If the house elf loses control of his mind, their magic will fade away as will the house elf." This last part was said with great sadness, as if it was something she had just witnessed.

"Thank you Sassy. I found Sassy after my eighth birthday. Before that I didn't even know I was a wizard. Do you have any other questions for her?"

Hermione asked, "How does Harry treat you? And why do you call him 'Master'?"

Sassy's eyes lit up and her whole countenance brightened. "Master Harry is the best boss anyone could hope for. He has made it clear to all of us that he wants to treat us as equals – and as friends. He has taken a great deal of time to improve the house elves lot in life. Master Harry has seen to the education of house elves to where they can interact with other persons without degrading themselves."

"Before Master Harry, if you were to have asked a house elf to talk to a goblin, the house elf would have wanted to do anything else since there has been bad feelings between the two cultures for centuries. But Master Harry has seen to it that the elves and the goblins are to treat all magical creatures as we would like to be treated."

"We call him 'Master', because he is the Master of the house. I know he hates being called 'Master', but it would be disrespectful to call him anything else, especially in the presents of others."

"Do you have any other questions?" Sassy asked.

The Granger's shook their heads no.

"Thank you Sassy, now before you go, let me talk you for a minute." Harry took Sassy to the back of the compartment, and with a wave of his hand, put up a privacy shield.

"Could I get you to ask Ty and the elves bound to the house of Ravenclaw to go and look at Hogwarts? I know they have house elves there, but I want to make sure that if there are any repairs or extra cleaning that needs to be done, have Ty and his group to do it, but remember, there's only about eight hours before the students will be showing up, so if they can't do everything, they can come back and finish up."

"If the Headmaster asks what is going on, just have Ty tell him that the Heir of Ravenclaw wishes to return the castle to its original glory and luster and remind the Headmaster that he does not control these house elves. Do not let the Headmaster know who the Heir of Ravenclaw is. If there are any supplies he needs, he can use what was left from Lupin Manor. If he needs more, have it billed to my account at Gringotts, understand?"

"Oh yes Master Harry! Ty and the others will be thrilled to have so much to do in such a little time! They haven't had a challenge like this since they built the Manor three years ago!"

"Okay, I know he'll be excited, just tell him, he can't demolish the castle first before fixing it up. It has to stay in one piece. People will be in the castle, and if he doesn't get finished before the Hogwarts express gets there, then he and his crew can work at nights."

"Okay. Thank Master Harry!" With that, she popped away.

Harry dismissed the privacy shield with a wave of his hand and turned to join the others in the room when he noticed a stupor look on everybody's face.

"What?"

"Harry, you have to remember you're expected to use a wand when you do something like that – oh and one other thing – you're too young to do something like that with a wand." Remus said with a smirk on his face. "And I think you broke Hermione."

Hermione and her parents were all looking at Harry as if he had just grown another head. Harry looked at the Grangers and realized what he had done. 'Oh, crap!' Harry thought.

'Watch your language young man. You made a mistake, now fix it. I don't think it will be too hard to convince Hermione to keep your secrets, as long as you teach her more magic. If she is anything like I was when I first went to Hogwarts, I couldn't get enough of magic. Go ahead and ask her if she will keep your secrets.' 'Ma' concluded.

Harry looked very seriously at Hermione and asked: "Will you keep my secrets?"

"Wh... What? Of course I will keep your secrets, but only if you will teach me more!"

'I told you that would be easy.'

"Mr. and Mrs. Granger? What about you?"

"Oh course... just what exactly do we call you? Lord-Baron Potter? Lord Potter? Mr. Potter? What?"

"Harry will be fine. To tell you the truth, I hate all those different titles; I just want to be a normal boy."

Remus let out a little laugh. "Harry, you better just get use to it, you are anything but a normal boy. My personal opinion is that you are an exceptional boy, and even though you don't like being in the spot-light, that is where you are destine to be."

"I know Remus, but I can dream can't I? I really just want to be normal. I can imagine what it's going to be like when I get to Hogwarts; everyone will be whispering my name, they'll want to look at my scar. They'll want to know where I've been the last nine and a half years, and asking how I got rid of Voldemort then I was a baby."

"I just want to go to class, learn with the teachers, hang out with friends, and not have to worry about everything else – well, maybe the occasional prank or something to keep the Headmaster on his toes."

Remus laughed, "I bet you will cub, I bet you will. But don't worry, you'll be okay, you won't be alone. I'm sure you'll make lots of friends while you're there."

"And a few enemies too probable."

"That's the way – Think positive!"

"Ha, ha, Remus. I just love it when you're sarcastic. Hey, it looks like the train is about to leave. Why don't you make yourself useful and help the Grange's out so they don't have to run the gauntlet of bigots out there?"

"Can do, Mr. and Mrs. Granger would you like to say goodbye to your daughter and then meet me out in the hallway?"

Dan and Emma Granger hugged and kissed their little girl goodbye, reminding her to write and let them know how everything is going. Hermione for her part was attentive to her parents, but really just wanted the adventure to start. She had all ready met one of her goals – which was to meet a real-live witch or wizard that could tell her more about the real culture in the magical part of England.

After the parents and Remus had left, Harry helped Hermione with her trunk, and got settled for the ride to Hogwarts.

"Do you know how long the ride will take?" Hermione asked.

"No. This is my first time on the Hogwarts Express also. But I hear it's about eight hours long so we'll have plenty of time to talk if you want to." Harry replied.

Harry looked out the window of the train car to the landing where some last minutes stragglers were just coming through the barrier. It was a family of six redheads.

It appeared that all but the mother and the youngest of the children – the only girl in the group – were going to be going to Hogwarts. Harry noticed how nervous the youngest boy was to get on the train. 'Must be his first year too. It looks like the youngest girl wants to go, but couldn't.'

Harry's attention was then drawn to another group - an older woman and another young man. 'Must be his Grandma.' Harry thought to himself.

Harry heard his 'Ma' gasp. 'Harry! That young man looks just like Frank Longbottom! If that's Neville, you have to help him. I was his

godmother and couldn't tell his parents about the magical bind that was on his core! You have to help him!

Harry could hear the pain and anguish in her voice. This was something that she had felt bad about for a very long time.

'Don't worry 'Ma, I'll help him. You have my word on it'

'Thanks son that would be a great weight off my mind. Maybe you could expand his core and mental facilities as well. There is a new moon is coming up in a week on September 8th.'

'I'll do what I can 'Ma'. I'm sure you won't let me forget.'

'Now don't get smart with me young man! I can make your life miserable if I want to you know.'

'Don't worry 'Ma' I won't forget Neville. I don't want my life to be hell while I'm at Hogwarts.'

Just then the clock chimed on the station platform, the train blasted its whistle and the Hogwarts Express started to move down the track.

Harry noticed the small redheaded girl run to keep up with the train waving at her brothers as the train started to speed away. Harry couldn't help but also wave at the little girl on the platform also. He felt a little pang in his heart to think that he didn't have anyone (besides Remus) who was that passionate about seeing him leave.

Hermione noticed the unshed tear in Harry's eye and thought it strange.

"Harry? Are you okay?" She asked softly.

"What?" Harry wiped his eyes, "ya, I'm okay. It's just that I'll never know what its like to have 'family' come down and see me off at the platform. I mean, Remus is great and I love him, but it's not quite the same as having a real mother and father, or other siblings see you off on a trip. Know what I mean? Well, probable not. You've got great parents and I can tell they care about you a great deal. Sorry for my rambling."

"That's okay Harry. I do kind of know what you're talking about. I've always wondered what it would be like if I had a brother or sister. I always wished I had someone a little older that could show me how something was done, or maybe I'd be the older sibling that could show the younger kids what I had learned. Being an only child is all it's cracked up to be."

Just then the compartment door opened, and the youngest of the redheaded boys stuck his head in and asked, "Do you mind if I come in here with you? Everyplace else is full-up."

Harry answered for both of them. "Sure, there's plenty of room in here."

"Thanks, by the way, my name is Ron, Ron Weasley." The young man said after he had put his trunk in the overhead bin.

"This is Hermione Granger, and my name is Harry, Harry Potter."

Ron's eyes got big as saucers. "Really? I heard you would be starting Hogwarts this year, but I didn't expect to meet you on the train!"

"Is it true that you have a ... you know... scar... from where You-know-how tried to kill ya?"

"What? Oh, ya." Harry held up his bangs to show the lightning shaped scar that made him famous and took away his family.

"Wicked!" Ron whispered.

They talked for a few moments about Ron's family and about how Hermione was muggle-born. Harry kept on having a feeling as if they weren't alone; that there was another witch or wizard in the car with them. But Harry didn't say anything to the others; he just thought that with a train full of magical people, maybe his scans were off a little.

Ron had just brought out his pet rat 'Scabbers'. His older twin brothers had taught him a spell that would change the color of the rat to yellow.

Ron was about to start the spell when the door to their compartment opened again. A young girl – another first year for sure – stuck her head in and started to say something, but when she saw Ron had about to try something, she stopped.

"Oh you're going to do a spell? Okay then, let's see it."

Ron cleared his throat.

"Sunshine, daisies, butter mellow,

Turn this stupid, fat rat yellow!"

Ron shook his wand at the rat but nothing happened.

Harry could tell that the spell wasn't a real spell, but it should have had some effect on the rat. That was when he noticed that the rat had its own aura! And since there were no magical rats, that could only mean that this wasn't a real rat, but an animagus!

'Ma', could you please look at that rat that Ron has?' Harry asked. 'I think it may be an animagus, and didn't you say Peter's form was a rat?'

'That's right Harry. It's been a long time since I've seen Wormtail, but that rat sure does look like him – except he has a toe missing on one of his front paw.'

'Thanks 'Ma', I think I'll try something with this rat when we get to Hogwarts.'

'Just be careful Harry. If Peter could trick Sirius, he may be able to trick you also.'

'I don't think so 'Ma'; I won't give him a chance.'

"That's it?" The new girl asked. "Not a very good trick if you ask me."

"Ya." Ron said sounding disappointed and turning red in the face. "That's the last time I trust the twins with a spell."

"Any way," the new girl began again, "My name is Susan Bones, and I'm helping a boy named Neville Longbottom find his pet toad. You three haven't seen it by chance have you?"

"No I don't think so," answered Hermione.

"Did you say Neville Longbottom?" Harry asked.

"Yes, do you know him? Awfully forgetful, besides, I mean, really, who has a toad in this day and age? That is so last century."

"Susan, if you could find Neville and bring him here, I'll show you a trick that will work. But Neville has to be here for it okay?"

"Sure, but who should I tell him wants to see him?"

"Just tell him Harry Potter would like to talk to him."

Susan gasped. This was the boy her aunt had told her about. Aunt Amelia had told her that she should look him up and try to be a friend, that he would need friends his own age, and that she could benefit from seeing how he treats other people as equals – regardless of their position and status in life. Something that Susan sometimes had a hard time remembering.

She quickly turned down the corridor and went looking for Neville as quick as she could. On the way, she told everyone she saw that Harry Potter was in the last compartment of the last car on the train.

Soon there was a group of people outside their compartment looking in wondering which boy was Harry Potter. Everyone in the compartment in question had their head down, reading from one book or another. Quidditch through the ages for Ron. Hogwarts a History for Hermione and A Brief Moment in Time for Harry.

Suddenly everyone was pushed out of the way by two young mounds of flesh followed by someone who you would have thought what a prince, with his blond hair, and his nose pointed so far up in the air.

The first of his 'Bodyguards' opened the compartment door up and the young 'prince' walked in.

"They are saying Harry Potter is in this compartment. My name is Malfoy, Draco Malfoy."

Ron tried to hold back a laugh, but didn't quite manage, catching Draco's attention.

"Think that's funny do you? No need to ask who you are. Shabby robes, and a vacant look in your eyes; You must be a Weasley." There was something that sounded like laughter from the two bodyguards outside the door.

Draco looked around the compartment, and next noticed Hermione. "Well, well, well, if it isn't the little mud-blood from the platform. So you didn't take our warning to just leave. I am so looking forward to showing you just what exactly mud-bloods are good for." He started to advance on Hermione, completely forgetting about the third person in the car.

Harry couldn't take it any longer. Making as much noise as he could, he slammed his book, stood up and stepped in between Draco and Hermione. Turning he faced the pale blond and said, "That would make me Harry Potter then." He said with a very serious look on face.

Draco involuntarily took a few steps back in to the door of the compartment. "YOU!" He yelled, as he recognized the boy from the robe shop and then again on the platform. He swallowed hard, and what little blood was in his face quickly drained.

Draco quickly recovered, squared his shoulder and delivered the message he had been sent to give.

"You'll find there are all kinds of wizards in this world Potter. Some are better to know than others." He looked down his sharp nose at Ron with a sneer on his face. "I can help you choose the right kind of friends here." He held out his hand as a gesture of friendship.

Harry looked down at Draco's hand, and noticed a faint odor of a liquid Imperius Curse.

Harry's aura started to flair as he looked coldly into Draco's eyes. "No thanks, I think I can make friends by myself thank you." Harry turned his back to Draco, and took one step away. Draco saw this

as an opportunity to apply the potion to the back of Harry's neck. Unfortunately for Draco, Harry turned back around and Draco seemed to stop involuntarily.

"I won't try to attach me from behind Malfoy. The next time you do, you may not like the results. Also, I would wash my hands before getting to Hogwarts. I'm sure the Headmaster would be very interested in that potion that you currently have on it."

Without a word, Draco seemed to go flying backward hitting his two bodyguards and knocking them all to the ground.

Scrambling up, Draco faced Harry again and said, "You better watch yourself Potter if you know what's good for you."

Harry let out a little laugh, "You better watch your bodyguards Malfoy, you seem to have gotten some of the Imperius potion on each of them."

Draco looked in horror at his two large 'friends'. Each of them had a glassy look in their eyes staring blankly at him as if waiting for his orders.

"Crabbe, Goyle, get me out of here!" he yelled. The two young mounds of flesh picked young Mr. Malfoy up, one under each arm, and went crashing through the crowd of students using Draco as a shield. Most of the other students were laughing at Crabbe and Goyle's antics.

"Okay, people, there's nothing left to look at. Why don't we all just go back to our compartments and enjoy the trip." Harry said, using a bit of his aura to stress the point that the people really didn't want to stay around there.

As the people disbursed, Susan Bones returned with Neville Longbottom.

"I have wanted to do something like that to Draco for years!" Susan said. "Was he really trying to use an Imperius potion on you Harry?"

"Yes, but don't worry, I have a feeling he will be busy for the rest of the trip with his two new best friends."

Harry looked up and noticed the shocked expression on the round-faced boy in front of him. Harry put out his hand and said, "Hi, I'm Harry Potter. You must be Neville."

For his part, Neville just stood there dumb-founded as he shook Harry's hand.

"Please, won't you and Susan please come into the compartment? Oh, I almost forgot. Harry took out his wand and said, "Accio Trevor". A very surprised toad came rushing down the hallway. Using seeker like reflexes, Harry reached out and caught the run-away toad in his hand. "Here you go. Let me get something so he won't get away again."

Harry returned back to the compartment, followed by a shocked Susan and Neville. Harry made sure he cast a strong privacy spell on the door so that they would not be disturbed for the remainder of the trip. He then reached into his pocket and placed his shrunken trunk on the floor and cast a wordless, wandless 'Engorgio' charm on the trunk, which expanded to its full size.

Everyone in the compartment is surprised at Harry's trunk. Ron is a little jealous, Hermione is fascinated, Neville is bewildered, and Susan is confused.

"Harry, that doesn't look like a standard student's trunk. That looks more like an Aurors multi-chamber trunk, where did you get it? And how did you enlarge it." Susan asked.

"Your partially right Susan, it is a multi-chamber trunk, but not an Aurors model. My Grandfather had this trunk built many years ago – just before he was killed. I didn't know anything about it until after my eighth birthday. We'll talk more about the trunk in a minute. Right now I need to find a cage for Trevor and Scabbers."

Harry opened the second chamber of his trunk as if looking for something. With his back turned from the group, he quickly conjured two cages, both with charms on them to prevent the occupants from escaping. Picking up the two cages, he presents them to each to Ron and Neville.

"Here, this will make it easier to carry your pets, and make sure they can't escape from you again."

Both boys reluctantly accept the cages, and everyone sits down in the compartment waiting for the next surprise to present it's self. They don't have to wait long.

"Susan, there is a specify reason why I wanted you to get Neville, but before I go any further, I need a witches, and wizards oath from each of you that you will not reveille anything that I tell or show you. I promise there is nothing immoral, or unlawful about it."

Hermione has no problem giving an oath to Harry. She has already seen some of the things that he can do and is willing to do just about anything to learn more.

Susan is more reluctant in giving an oath. She understands the significances of giving an oath and what it would mean to break it. However, her aunt has told her that it would be worth her while to get to know this young man better, so she too give a witches oath to Harry.

Neville is still dumbfounded that 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' has taken an interest in him. Not only that, but had given him a new cage to keep Trevor in. Harry said that he had something to tell him, and so he gave him a wizard's oath also.

Ron felt like he was the odd-man-out. It was just by chance that he asked Harry if he could sit in this compartment. What right did he have in sharing in the 'secrets' Harry might have? He had grown up with stories regarding what 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' had done when he was a baby, but was Harry now taking 'pity' on the youngest male Weasley? Ron hated pity, yet there was something different about Harry. He treated everybody the same – unless your name was Malfoy, and then he treated you as you deserved. Finally Ron also gave Harry a wizard's oath.

End of Chapter 17

Next Chapter – Removing the Binds

Chapter 18 – Removing the Binds

Reposted:

After receiving an oath from everyone, Harry, took out his wand and cast a few more privacy and locking charms on their compartment.

"Now this first part deals mainly with Neville, so Neville, I'll let you make the decision. Do you want me to tell you the things I need to tell you in private, or I can just tell it to the group. They will be under the same wizard's oath that they have given me – meaning they can not discuss what they hear me tell you, without permission from you, understand?"

"Ya I think I do. It's fine to tell everyone – who knows when I might need some of their help understanding what it is you have to say."

"Okay, here goes." Harry addressed everyone in the compartment. "All of you know I was born to James and Lily Potter eleven years ago on July 31st. What you may not know is that Neville here was born to Frank and Alice Longbottom on July 30th. Alice Longbottom was to be my godmother, and Lily Potter was to be Neville's godmother – so I guess that makes us god brothers."

Neville was in shock. Here was 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' and not only did he know who he was; he also knew who his parents were, and who his godmother was to be. His Gran had never told him that they knew the Potters! Why wouldn't she? Here the Harry Potter - 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' was acting as if they were to have been best friends. What was the term he used? 'god brothers?' It may be a little strange, but for some reason he liked the way it sounded.

"We know what happened with me just less than ten years ago when Voldemort – O, come on guys it's only a name – came and tried to kill me. He came to kill me because there was a prophecy. I won't tell you the prophecy just yet, but let's just say that Neville could have just as easily been 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' as me."

Now, everyone else in the compartment was stunned. Here was 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' telling them that someone else could have been chosen, and from the way he sounded, he almost wished they had been chosen instead of him. Harry continued.

"After Voldemort was removed from his body – not killed, but not quite alive also – I was taken away from my godfather and placed by Professor Dumbledore with my mothers sister (my aunt) and her husband against my parents wishes as stated in their Will. My aunt and uncle both hated magic and for the next seven years I was mistreated and abused – but I didn't know why, and no Susan, you can not tell your aunt. She already knows most of this information anyway."

"On my eighth birthday, I came into possession of some journals that my mother and father had written, and this trunk. Among other things in the journals, they say that my parents discovered that the ministry, under the advisement of Professor Albus Dumbledore, had each infant wizarding child tested to see how strong their magical core was at birth. The practice was that if a child were too strong magically at birth, they would have their magical core bound so that they were less likely to grow up to be a powerful dark witch or wizard."

Hermione was just taking everything in. Accepting it as simple a matter of fact. She had not been raised in a magical family, and so probable didn't have her magical core bound.

The other occupants in the train car were dumbfounded. Susan was asking herself why her aunt hadn't told her about her magical core being bound, or why hadn't she done something to have her bind removed. Susan understood how significant it was to the over all power of a witch or wizard to have their core grow and develop during their early years.

Ron was just mad! How dare someone bind his magical core! Why didn't his parents do something about this? Did everybody have their core bound? Obviously not since Harry seemed to be so much more powerful then he was.

Neville didn't know what to think, so he just kept his mouth shut and listened.

"My mother was able to prevent my core from being bound, however, due to the sensitive nature of what she knew, was not able to do the same for you Neville."

"One of the things she plead for in her journals was that at my earliest convenience, I was to find you, and check to see if in fact you had a block on your core. If you did, she wanted me to remove it and to start training you so that you could overcome the years of effect the bind would have had on your core."

"Do you mean to tell me that every magical child has a bind on their core?" Susan asked.

"No, most muggle born magical children would not have a bind on their core because there is no record of them at St. Mungo's. It is also possible that other families discovered this bind on their children, and like mine, prevented it from happening. If I may demonstrate, I can show each of you your current magical power level is."

Receiving each of their permissions, Harry walked over to each one with his wand and said *magnitudo de magica* (size of magical core). Susan's rating was 220, Hermione's was 485. Ron's rating was 240, and Neville's was 130.

"That's why everyone in my family thought I was a squib." Neville said sadly. "My power rating is just barely over what a squib's rating would be."

"What's your power rating Harry?" Hermione asked.

Harry just smiled at her. "My parents put a protective amulet on me when I was just a baby, that amulet prevents anyone, even me, from getting a good power reading on me."

"Well, why don't you just remove the amulet and then test yourself and put it back on?" Ron asked.

"The amulet was put on by my father, and could only be removed by him to prevent any damage to either myself, or the amulet. Besides, after my father put the amulet on me, it apparently fused with me over my heart, so there's no way for me to know how to take it off without doing some research first." Harry didn't think it would be too bad telling them a half lie... or was that a half truth?

"Now may I see if there is a power block on you?" Harry asked.

Again, after receiving permission from each one, Harry went over each one with the ostendere virtus compresco – (Show or Reveal the power block). What was interesting is that, as expected, Hermione didn't have a power block on her, but Susan and Ron both had one, but Neville had two power blocks on his core.

"It would appear that you had two power blocks placed on your core by two different people. One probable when you were a baby, and another one at a later time. The second person may not have been aware of what the other was doing. This would account for your slow development.

Now for the sixty-four Galleon question – Do you want the power blocks removed.

"YES" the three shouted.

"Okay, I thought that is what you would say. But before I do that, let me explain a little bit more about this trunk."

"As I said earlier, this trunk was commissioned by my grandfather. It was finished the day he was killed, and sat in the trunk makers store until my father went and requested a similar trunk be made. There are nine chambers in the trunk. The first two are normal expanded space chambers where I can store my clothes, books, and other study supplies."

Taking everybody into the third chamber of the trunk, Harry heard Hermione and Susan let out a little squeal of joy.

"This is a copy of the Potter's Main library and study hall." Harry began, "According to what my parents wrote in their journals, this looks a great deal like the library at Hogwarts." Harry then went on to tell how books could be added or retrieved, and that without his permission; you could not get to any of the books.

The boys had to drag Susan and Hermione from the library area. Hermione especially wanted to read everything right now. Harry had to assure her that there would be time later to start reading.

Chamber four was more to the boys liking. This was the Physical training room with a track, weights, dueling platform, training dummies, and power targets. Harry demonstrated how much of the

equipment worked, and had each of them have-a-go at the power targets in their 'stationary' mode.

"We'll skip chamber five for right now since it is my private area, and I don't know what I might have left out." Harry blushed slightly, but the rest of the kids just laughed at him.

Chamber six was the Potions lab. "This was my mum's idea." Harry said. "Even though she was a charms mistress, dad said in his journal that she could have just as easily been a potions mistress as well. I guess if we have trouble in our potions class we can always come in here and work on it some more."

Harry noticed Ron frown at the idea of doing more work.

Chamber seven was more to everyone's liking. The 'open spaces' with the wooded area was peaceful and serene. "This is where I go for some 'down-time'." Harry admitted. "It can also be used for keeping animals, like Trevor or Scabbers, or larger animals, or it could be used for training as an animagus."

"But Harry, unsupervised training as an animagus is illegal!" Susan stated. "Besides becoming an animagus is very difficult and closely controlled by the ministry. You weren't thinking of becoming an animagus were you?"

"No, I wasn't thinking of becoming an animagus," Said Harry, 'because I already am one'. He thought to himself.

'That's splitting a mighty thin hair Harry.' 'Ma' said.

'It is, but technically it is the truth,' was his response.

"Harry, what's this monument for? Who is Raven." Hermione asked.

"Maybe Sassy would be a better one to ask about that. Sassy?"

At once Sassy was at Harry side. "Sassy, Hermione was asking about the monument here. Could you please tell her about Raven?"

"Oh yes Master Harry!" The little elf turned and faced the other children in the chamber.

"After Master Harry had been installed as the head of two different houses, he called for a general meeting all the elves of those houses, one at a time. Well, being quite young at the time, Harry not only called for the elves of the House of Potter, but also all free elves who had been dismissed, or who were not attached to a house. Needless to say it was quit chaotic." Sassy was enjoying telling of one of Harry's 'slip-ups' even if it was three years ago.

"While I and several other house elves from the House of Potter were trying to get things straightened out, Master Harry called a general meeting for all house elves for the second house he is the head of – and no, I can not tell you the name of the House. Anyway, when Master Harry called for a general meeting of the second House, only one house elf appeared."

"Harry was here with his guardians when a portal opened up in front of him. Immediately the guardians drew their wand ready for any threat that may present it's self. Instead, a firm voice is heard coming from the portal – "I really don not think that will be necessary." – "Was all he said, suddenly, there was a feeling of complete contentment and serenity. Out of the portal stepped a single elf. Ancient beyond years – wise to surpass all understanding and noble beyond words. He had been entrusted by the last head of this noble house to deliver certain key items to the current head of house. All the other house elves immediately stopped what every they were doing to watch this noble elf."

"When Master Harry asked him how he should address him, the ancient said that it had been so many years since he had spoken to anyone that he could not remember his name, but for now, he would be called 'Raven'.

"Raven asked that he be allowed to fulfill his duties so that he may be permitted to go on to the next great adventure."

Sassy had to stop for a few moments to clear the unshed tear from her eye, and a lump in her throat.

"Here was a house elf that had been faithful in the extreme in executing his charge. Remaining faithful to the duty entrusted to him for untold centuries. He was what every house elf should aspire to be."

"To see the dignity that Raven displayed while fulfilling his assignment, and ..." Sassy looked at Harry with a love and respect, "to see the dignity that was extended to Raven by his new Master. That is when Master Harry won the hearts of every house elf that was there that day."

Sassy continued quietly, "After Raven had completed his task, he ask Master Harry to free him so that he could enter the next great as a free elf. Most of the other elves would have found that terrifying, but to see how it was done with such dignity and respect, put all fears to rest. Master Harry did not have a loose piece of clothes with him, so he sat down on the ground, took off a shoe, and then a stock and gave that Raven." Sassy had to fight to keep the tears from falling.

"Raven thanked Master Harry for allowing him to complete his task, and then left his blessing for Master Harry and his friends: 'May you be successful in your fight against evil'. With that, Raven faded from view."

"Master Harry asked me to set up this memorial for Raven. It is a place we elves treat as hollowed ground. Each of the house elves have now seen an example of true devotion and dedication to they house and master. We wish to be worthy enough that if Master Harry asked us to do something similar, we could and would." Sassy finished the talk standing tall, and with a look of pride in her eyes.

"Thank you Sassy, you did a great job. Oh, that reminds me, I need to write a letter to Professor Dumbledore about Ron's spell, could you please get Hedwig, and let her out when I through with the note?" Harry asked.

"Sure Master Harry. It would be my pleasure." Sassy replied.

"We'll skip chamber eight for now, because that is where I want us to end up at. Chamber nine is mainly just a large empty space where you can put anything you want in." With that, Harry took his new friends to the ninth chamber.

Ron's eyes opened wide when he saw a scaled down quidditch patch in the back of the chamber. "Wicked! Do you play quidditch?" he asked Harry.

"No, not really, I just like flying around practicing the different positions. But it's kind of hard to practice keeper, when you're the only one on the field."

"You know, a greenhouse would go nicely down here." Neville said.

"A greenhouse? Why a greenhouse?" Ron asked of his new friend.

Neville looked rather sheepishly as he hung his head and responded. "My Gran has a greenhouse at her manor that she lets me look after. It's where I go to be alone and to forget about my parents and their situation. I know that sounds kind of bad, but..."

To everyone's surprise, it was Susan that put her arm around his shoulders and gave him a supportive squeeze. "I understand Neville." She said. "My parents were killed almost before I can remember, but at least I had my aunt to go to. I think I got off easy. I don't know how I would act my parents were still alive, but didn't know who I was."

The other students looked at her and Neville with a questioned look on their faces.

"It's not really my place to say, but I hear a lot of different things from my aunt and some of the other Aurors since she is the head of the Magical Law Enforcement Department. Neville...?"

Neville still had his head down. He couldn't believe that someone else knew one of his most painful secrets. Tears slowly ran down his round cheeks just thinking about his parents in the long-term care section of St. Mungo's Hospital. "Go ahead." Was about all he could say.

Susan continued, with her arm still around Neville for support. "Well, I guess it makes more sense knowing how close Harry's and Neville's birthdays are..." She turned to mainly face Ron and Hermione, thinking that Harry knew all about this next part.

"The same night Harry's parent's were killed by You-know-who, another group of his Death-eaters went to the Longbottom house – probable to do the same thing to Neville, but before getting to that, the four Death-eaters held his parents under the Cruciatus curse until they were driven out of their minds. The four Death-eaters were

caught but of course, it was already too late. Neville wasn't even there. So, obviously, the four Death-eaters were tried, then sent to Azkaban Prison for the rest of their lives."

"Neville's parents aren't dead, but they are in some long-term care facility where they will probable stay for the rest of their lives. "

The reaction from the other children was interesting. Hermione, thinking how she would have reacted if it had been her parents, held on to the closest boy to her, Ron, and Ron, thinking how he would react if it had been his parents, reached out for the closest girl next to him – Hermione to get and give comfort and support. While they were lost in their own thoughts, they found themselves thinking that maybe Neville was braver then they had originally given him credit for.

All at once, Ron and Hermione noticed how they were holding on to each other, and, as if someone had put up two magnets with the same pole on it, moved apart as quick as they could blushing heavily.

No one had notice how heavy the magic was feeling in the air at that moment. Harry was livid, and his aura was showing it. 'Harry, you need to get yourself under control before you scare your new friends. I don't think they are ready to see you like this right now.' 'Ma' said.

'Why didn't you tell me about Neville's parents sooner?' Harry asked.

'Well, I guess it's because I didn't know about it until right now. Remember, they were attacked the same day that Voldemort attacked us. I had always wondered why when we saw Neville in Diagon Alley he was with his Gran and not Frank or Alice.' 'Ma' concluded.

'I wonder if uncle Remus or any of the others knew about it and didn't tell me.' Harry asked himself. 'I'll have to ask them when I see them.'

Harry took some cleansing breaths, and brought up his Occlumency shield to full to suppress the emotions he was feeling right now.

Everyone was brought out of their thoughts as Harry cleared his throat.

"Neville, I will promise you that you will have your greenhouse. Besides, it would be great to be able to grow some of our own plants for potions. Also, I will do everything I can to help your parents. After all, that's my responsibility as a godson."

"Thanks Harry. Thanks Susan." Neville said in a small voice blushing.

"Anytime Neville." Susan found herself saying giving him a one-armed hug.

Once everyone had their emotions under control, Harry took them to chamber number eight.

Susan immediately went into overdrive.

"This is a rites and rituals chamber isn't it! Do you know how difficult these are to build! Have you done any rites or rituals in here yet! Do you know how dangerous that could be if something went wrong?"

Harry held up his hands as if defending himself.

"Yes, this is a rites and ritual chamber. No, I didn't know how difficult it was to build since it was my grandfather that had it built. No, I haven't done any rites or rituals on myself yet. For one thing, I'm too young, and yes, I do know how dangerous things could be if something had gone wrong. But this room also has one other main function."

"Notice the runes that have been drawn on the different surfaces? If you activate them in the right sequence..."

Harry uses his wand to activate the proper runes. When he is finished, the other students noticed two clocks appear against one wall. One had a label 'Outside' that included the date along with the time on it. The second clock was labeled 'Inside'.

"For every two minutes of outside time, one hour will pass by in this chamber. That works out to one day inside for every forty-eight minutes outside or 10 days inside for every eight hours outside."

"This is where I will take the binds off your magical cores. I'm sure you will need some rest after the binding is removed, since your magical core will have to find a new level of equilibrium without the bind on it."

"But Harry, where will we stay? What will we eat? How long will we have until we reach Hogwarts?" Hermione asked.

"Those are all good questions Hermione. Sassy!"

In an instant, Harry's personal house elf Sassy, in her House of Potter robes, was in front of him.

"Yes Master Harry? Did you need something?" She asked.

"One minute Sassy." Harry said. Turning to the others he started to explain. "It appears that all house elves appear to be immune to the effects of the time compression between the outside world and the inner chamber. As such, she will be able to retrieve anything we need from the 'outside' world, and bring them into the 'inside' world."

Turning back to Sassy, Harry said: "Sassy, we will need a magical tent large enough for all of us, and supplies for five days. I will be removing some binds from their magical core, and they will need a place to eat and rest. They may have access to the regular sections of the Potter Library should any of them ask for something to read. Is that understood?"

"Yes Master Harry, perfectly, I won't be but a moment." With that she was gone.

"I know personal house elves are not permitted at Hogwarts, so Sassy will be staying here in my trunk, or back at one of my guardian's manor when she isn't needed somewhere else."

Harry had just finished speaking when what looked like a six person tent appeared against the far side of the wall.

"Oh, it looks like Sassy is ready for us now." Harry said as he started to move towards the tent.

"You expect us to all fit in that tent Harry? Where will the girls stay? I'm NOT going to be sleeping in the same room as the boys!" Hermione said.

"No one is expecting you to Hermione." Harry said. "This is a magical tent. Please just step inside."

Hermione was skeptical as she entered the tent, but when she did, the others heard her gasp. She quickly stuck her head out of the tent and looked around, then drew her head back into the tent and gasped again. Coming all the way out this time, Hermione grabs Ron and Harry and drag them into the tent.

Inside was a mansion to say the least. The tent door entered directly into a forty-foot by twenty-foot formal living room with marble floors, and oriental rugs, leather chairs and couches. There were magical portraits of Harry's ancestry, and a suit of armor standing at attention in the corner.

You could see that a kitchen / eating nook was off the backside of the living room. Also, a study area, and exercise room.

On either side of the living area were staircases going up to a second level. The left side was marked 'Girls', and the right side was marked 'Boys'.

"Harry this is fantastic! How did you do it?" Hermione asked.

Harry smiled, looked at the others – Susan was trying not to laugh, turned back to Hermione and with a straight face said: "Magic."

The others stated laughing. They weren't laughing at Hermione, but at how the 'joke' had been set up. Hermione for her part just stood there for a few moments with her hands on her hips looking rather displeased with everyone, but after a moment, she too saw how funny the question was, and joined them in the laugh.

"Come on everyone, if I know Sassy, she already has a snack ready for us in the kitchen."

Harry led the way, and soon everyone was busy eating and making small talk. Everyone noticed how quickly Ron could put away a sandwich, and the fact that Sassy was eating with them. Hermione

thought this was normal, but the others knew it was unheard of for a house elf to eat with the family.

After everyone had enough to eat (even Ron), Harry suggested that they all go to the study area where he could explain what would be happening next.

After they were all around the table, Harry began. "As I had said before, my mum was a charm's mistress. She was the one that came up with those versions of the 'show size of magical core', and 'show power block'. She also came up with a charm to remove the binding, amoveo virtus compresco – (Remove power block). As she explained in her journal, the person casting this spell must basically over power the binding spell. Now in this respect, we are somewhat lucky."

"The binding spells are set to 'disappear' after the person reaches their seventeenth birthday. That means that they have been deteriorating for the past eleven years, so I won't have to use as much energy as if the spell had been newly cast."

"Since Hermione doesn't have a bind on her, I thought she could take notes on the procedure, and also cast the ostendere virtus compresco charm to show when the bind has been eliminated. When we are through removing the bind, I would like to take another reading of your core strength, then Sassy can take you to your room where you can rest."

"When you get back up, we will test you again to see how things have changed. Then for the rest of the five days we can read, talk, get to know each other a little better. About the only thing we won't be able to do is go outside of the time-flex and play some quidditch. Sorry Ron."

They all laugh for a moment and then get back to business.

"Well, who wants to be first?"

Susan stands up quickly and says: "I think it should be girls first." Susan was angry that no one had told her about the bind that had been on her for the last eleven years.

The group went over to the exercise area where a shield could be placed between what Harry was doing, but still allow the others to see what was going on.

Harry brought Susan over to a chair and had her sit down. Hermione was sitting behind a desk next to Susan, where she could cast the *ostendere virtus compresco* to see if the bind was still there, and could make notes as needed on the procedure.

"Okay," Harry started, "Hermione, if you could record the basic information – subjects name, nature of procedure, previous power rating, and then cast the reveal power block charm. Then I'll remove the bind."

"Okay," Hermione said. "Ready."

Harry showed her the wand movement to monitor the magical bind, and the incantation that went with it. After a few times, Hermione had it mastered.

"Okay, here we go Susan. I'll start off low, and slowly add more power into the spell until we can remove it. Ready?"

"As ready as I'll every be." She said.

First, they took and recorded their preliminary reading to show Susan starting magical rating. Then Hermione cast her charm to monitor the bind, then Harry did his part. "*amoveo virtus compresco*" Harry whispered. A soft silver shield surrounded Susan. She let out a small gasp when she first felt the spell hit the bind. Slowly Harry increased the amount of energy in to the spell. Hermione kept an eye on her charm and watched the image as the bind became dimmer and dimmer until it disappeared completely. When it did, Susan let out another gasp as she felt a rush of magic come into her newly freed core.

Harry stopped the one spell and quickly cast the *magnitudo de magica* (size of magical core) spell, and asked Hermione to record the new reading.

"345 – that's more then a fifty percent increase! Susan, how are you feeling right now?" Hermione asked.

"I feel light headed. It's like some kind of power rush. I don't know if I could stand up right now if I wanted to."

"Do you want to go up to your room now, or do you want to stay down here for a minute?" Harry asked.

"I think I'd like to stay here to see how the others do."

"Okay, I'll have Sassy move you outside of the shield. Just stay seated."

Sassy moved Susan out, and Ron came into the area. Taking another chair you could tell he was quite nervous. Just as Harry and Hermione were going to start, he raised his hand and stopped them.

"Why are you doing this for me Harry? I mean I can understand why you are doing it for Neville and even for Susan, but why me? We didn't meet until I opened the compartment door and asked if I could sit down. I don't think I've met you before so why would you chose to do something like this for me? Is it out of pity? Is it out of guilt? Do you feel that if you did it to one person in the compartment, you would have to do it for everyone? Or are you doing it just to show off – to show that you can do it?"

"Ron!" Hermione said.

"No Hermione, he has a valid point and I think he needs to be answered."

"I'll give you a couple of answers Ron. The first is that if Malfoy hates you that much you can't be all bad."

That brought a smile and slight laugh from everyone.

"I'll answer your last question first." Harry got very serious, and all the humor left his eyes. He looked right into Ron's eyes and answered: "I never do anything 'just to show off'. Not any more. I hope I've learned my lesson regarding that."

Ron found that he could not take his eyes off of Harry's. He felt a cold shiver go through his body. He knew that he should never question Harry's motives again.

"I am trying to correct something that shouldn't have been allowed to happen. That doesn't mean that I'll be removing the magical bind off of Malfoy's core anytime soon – if he even has a bind on his, but I believe it should be left up to the individual as to how they use what they have been given, and not have that decision taken away from them.

I believe that with power comes responsibility and a person should have the opportunity to use their power for the betterment of their fellow beings – ALL fellow beings, magical and muggle, goblin, house elf, witch, wizard or other. You treat all beings honestly and fairly."

"And if a person doesn't act fairly? What then? They answer to you?"

"In a word – yes."

"What gives you that authority? That's being a little smug for even 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' isn't it?" Ron was being quite belligerent in his statements.

Harry just smiled at his new friend, hoping he could make him understand.

"Do any of you know what a 'Paladin' is?" Harry asked.

Hermione answered before anyone else could. "A paladin is a fighter for justice. He would have a high moral standard, and would be very powerful."

"So you're telling me that you're a 'paladin'? What proof do you have of that claim?" It was obvious that Ron was still not convinced.

"I may not be a paladin yet, but I am in the process of being trained as one. Do any of you know about a paladin named Roland, and his sword, 'Durendal'?" Harry asked.

This time to everyone's surprise, it was Neville who answered. "Roland was the nephew of King Charlemagne, and was chief among the twelve paladins or 'champions'. The sword given to Roland by King Charlemagne was said to be indestructible. Roland tried to destroy it, but ended up creating a 40 meter by 100 meter

gap in the Pyrenees Mountains that helped King Charlemagne retreat during the battle of Roncevaux Pass. When Roland found he could not destroy Durendal, he threw it into a poisonous stream so the enemy could not get it. Roland is said to have died in that battle."

"Very good Neville, you know your history well," said Harry.

"I always wished I could be something like Roland while I was growing up. I wanted to be a champion for the weak and oppressed, but then, I was the weak, and I felt oppressed."

"Don't worry Neville, I have a feeling you will prove more the fit to be a champion."

Turning his attention back to Ron, Harry lifts his right hand and calls Durendal to come to him. As it appears in his hand, the blade looks as if it is 'burning' in a pure silver flame. As Harry lowers the blade to Ron, the flame goes from silver to green.

"Ah, so that's the problem... you're jealous." Harry stated in a normal tone.

"I AM NOT JEALOUS!" screamed Ron jumping up from the chair, blushing bright red. Then calming down, he lowers his head and says, "I don't mean to be jealous. It's just that it seems like everyone is something special but me."

"My oldest brother Bill, he was a head-boy at Hogwarts. The next oldest Charles was the captain of the house quidditch team and a star Seeker. Even this year, there will be my brother Percy who is a prefect and the twins, Fred and George who are always making people laugh. What is there for me to do? Or how can I stand out when all of my brothers have already done everything. I feel lost and worthless." Ron finished with his head looking down at the ground."

"Believe it or not Ron, I know exactly how you feel. No, I don't have a brother who has done things before me. For basically the first eight years of my life, I was treated as if I were nobody – a zero. I felt jealous of every other kid that had a mum or a dad, or that had brothers and sisters that loved them. Believe it or not, when I saw you on the platform, I was jealous of you! I would give everything I

have to have a loving family like yours. If I could, I would trade you straight across."

"In reading my mum's journal, I came across one of her favorite poems called 'Desiderata'. There are a couple of lines from this poem that you need to hear:

... If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

There's a lot more to the poem, but this is the main point I want to make. There will always be someone better or worse than you. If you worry too much about it, it will canker your soul and you will always be miserable."

"Now, getting back to the original question – Why am I doing this for you? To be honest with you, it is the right thing to do, because I can remove this bind, and because you need the bind removed to become your 'best' self. Will you accept that answer? Do you still want me to remove the bind on your magical core?"

Ron felt guilty about questioning Harry's motives. "If you think I am still worthy, then yes, I would like the binding removed." As he sat back down into the waiting chair.

"Of course you're worthy Ron. You just had some questions that need to be resolved, and some issues that you will have to face in the now and in the future."

With that, Harry instructed Hermione to do as they had done with Susan. After they were finished with Ron, Harry asked Hermione to take Ron's power rating again.

"480 – That's exactly double what it was before!" she announced excitedly.

"How are you feeling Ron?" Harry asked quietly.

"Whoa, I can see what Susan meant by getting a power rush! This feels great! Ah, Sassy, do you think you could help me out of the shielded area? I don't seem to be able to stand up right now."

Sassy helped Ron, and then helped Neville into the shielded area.

"Ready Nev?" Harry asked.

Neville looked nervously up at Harry and said: "Any time Bro." Harry smiled.

"I'm going to try to take the binds off one at a time. I don't know what will happen if I were to remove them both at once."

Again Hermione cast the ostendere virtus compresco – (Show or Reveal the power block) charm, and Harry concentrated on removing the first bind that they found.

When they were through with that, Hermione took note of Neville's increased power rating. "260! Congratulations Neville! You doubled your previous reading!"

"Ya, thanks. Just give me a minute to get use to this new feeling."

After a ten-minute break, Neville indicated he was ready to have the next bind removed.

Harry and Hermione repeated the process they had done previously. This time however Harry found that the bind had been put on by a much more powerful witch or wizard. Everyone else could also tell that this binding was much harder to remove.

Harry kept on putting more and more energy into his spell to remove the binding. Finally, you could tell that the binding was giving way. A few minutes later, with one final push, Harry got the binding to finally collapse.

Harry was soaking wet with sweat, and Neville looked like he had been put through the wringer. Both were breathing hard as Hermione completed her assignment and took Neville's final power rating.

"720! Neville, that's unbelievable! That's almost two and a half times the rating you were after the first bind was removed, and six time more then your original reading! Harry, why was that so much harder to remove?" she asked.

"Three main reasons, one, this bind was put on after the first bind, second, it was put on by a much more powerful witch or wizard and it lastly, it would appear that that person did not plan on having the bind come off in time. It was meant to be permanent. Some one wanted to permanently limit your abilities Neville."

"How are you feeling now?" Harry asked.

"I've never felt better in my life! Everything looks brighter, more colorful and full of life! Thank you so much Harry!"

"Hey, I promised my 'Ma', that I would do this as soon as I could. Now, I don't know about you, but after that last bind, I need to get some rest."

The others that had had the magical binds removed from them agreed. Hermione however was ready to start reading some of those books she had seen in the library.

"I'll tell you what Hermione, why don't you go to the study in the tent, and I'll leave Sassy here to help you get things from the library okay? The rest of us are going to take a nap until dinnertime. Sassy will come and get us when it is ready."

With that everyone went to their respective room for a well-deserved rest, but before Harry could get away, Hermione said she had one more question to ask.

The rest of the group went up to their rooms, when Hermione turned to Harry and asked: "Okay Harry, tell me, Just how much time did you spend in flextime over the last three years?"

Harry had been worried that one of his new friends would ask a question like that, but he didn't think it would be this quickly.

"Actually Hermione, that is a very personal question. Let me just say that I have spent a great deal of time here, or in a similar room on my guardians property. As I said, there is a prophecy hanging over my head, and I will be prepare when the time comes. I'm sorry if that seem to be 'short', but I don't really want that information getting out by accident."

"That's okay Harry, I understand. I just had to ask."

While Harry and the others rested, Hermione read. She asked Sassy to get her additional books on the Magical culture; creating, detecting and removing magical binds; and the nature of prophecies. She felt thrilled beyond belief that she now had access to all this information in a single library. Being a muggle-born witch, she knew she had a lot to learn with regards to this new magical world that she had been exposed to. She immediately went through every book Sassy brought to her, listing the differences between her two worlds. The more she read, the more frustrated she became.

There were arcane ideas and beliefs regarding the rights of individuals based on how someone was born – pure-blood, versus half-blood versus mixed-blood, versus muggle-born. Also arcane ideas as to how to treat other magical creatures, though some authors did seem to suggest that any magical being should be treated with equality and respect, but that opinion was defiantly in the minority. 'What type of world have I got myself into?' she asked.

Hermione had been reading for about four hours when Sassy informed her that dinner would be served.

Entering the dining area, she was greeted by the other occupants of the chamber, still rubbing the sleep out of their eyes. They all quietly sat down and started into the soup and sandwiches Sassy had put out for them.

After a few moments, Hermione got everyone's attention by clearing her throat.

"Ah, Harry? Um, well, first of all, thanks for the food and this neat place to study... but I was wondering if some of you could answer some questions for me?" She asked tentatively.

Harry and the others looked up from their meal and nodded their heads yes. "Sure Hermione, what is it you want to know about?" Harry asked.

"Well, I've been reading some of the wizarding culture book about the current state of affairs in the wizarding world, and I find myself a little concerned and confused."

"For example, I am a muggle-born witch. There seems to be a great deal of discussion as to if I should even be allowed to go to Hogwarts and learn magic. I mean, just look at that Draco boy from this morning. He and his 'friends' were yelling at me and my parents about we should just go home, that we wouldn't be welcome at Hogwarts or in the magical community." Hermione was fighting back a tear in her eye thinking about the experience she had had this morning.

"I mean, until you and your Uncle came to help us, no one stepped in to make them stop. Is this the type of attitude I'll be facing at Hogwarts? I don't know if I can take it if it is. I guess what I am asking is: What is each of yours opinion as to the status of 'classes' of blood in the wizarding world?"

Harry looked at the others around the table, and then back to Hermione. "What do you think about the issue of 'Blood Purity' Hermione?" Harry asked back.

"Personally I think it's ridiculous. I mean, what are you going to base it on? Raw power? Even after having the binds taken off your magical core, only Neville has a higher number than me, even though Ron's ending number was almost the same as mine. So what else would it be based on? Heritage? That's a luck of the draw as far as I am concerned. Remember you can pick your friends, but you can't pick your parents. So why not judge me on my ability?"

"I know as a muggle-born witch. That means that most of you have an eleven year head start in understanding the magical culture that I'm just now entering into. But given time, I'm sure I could come to function properly, and understand everything there is to know about this culture. I would love to see how well you would function in the muggle world – especially if you really are as isolated as the books I've read indicate you are. I'm sure I could work rings around you in that environment. Does that answer your question Harry?"

"Yes it does very nicely Hermione. Now Ron how bout you? How do you feel about the Blood-Purity issue?" Harry asked.

"Woll, I dot no saxtly." Ron started out.

"Ron, please don't try to speak with your mouth full." Hermione said half in disgust, having to look away from the train-wreck that was in his mouth.

Ron took a few moments to swallow his food before continuing. "Ya sound just like my Mum." Ron said softly.

"What was that Ronald?" Hermione asked coldly.

"Oh, a... nathing" came the reply.

"Like I was saying before I was interrupted, I really don't know exactly. I mean, I'm from one of the oldest pure-blood lines in Great Britain, but me Dad loves all things muggle, like batteries, and plugs and elektriecty..."

"The electricity Ron." Hermione corrected.

"Ya, like I said elektriecty. Anyway, I know there are some wizarding families that look down on ours because of his interest in the muggles. Some have even called us 'blood-traitors', but I'm like you Hermione, I believe it's what a person does and how they use the gifts they have been given that defines who they are. I don't think it has anything to do with blood. Look at our little group here; You have the Longbottom's, Bones', and Weasley's all some of the oldest pure-blood lines. You have you, Hermione, a muggle-born witch, and then you have Harry here, and even though both of his parents were magical, most people would still call him a half-blood because his mother was muggle-born."

"Now of all of us here, who do you think would be the most powerful? According to the blood purist, it should be one of us three, but it's not is it? It's Harry – a half-blood. I mean, just look what he did when he was just a baby! And who's the weakest among us? Again, according to the purist, it should be you, but it isn't. You have a higher number then two of us here. So I can't see were these guy's get there idea that magic should only be taught to the pure-bloods. I guess they just don't want to be shown up by some newcomer to the magical world."

"Well said Ron, but I'd still give anything to have my parents back." Harry said with his head facing the floor.

"I'm sorry Harry, I didn't mean anything by that." Ron said.

"I know Ron. It just that I still miss them, even though I barely knew them. But enough about that... How about you Susan? Where do you stand on the issue of the importance of blood in the wizarding world?"

"Well as most of you know, I live with my aunt, who is the head of The Department of Magical Law Enforcement (DMLE). As a prominent member of the Ministry, we get 'invited' to a lot of functions. It seems that most of the families that supported You-know-who are the ones that are most set in their views regarding the Blood issue. It is interesting that these same families seem to be the same ones that spend a lot of their time at the Ministry trying to buy their way out of trouble."

"I know Aunt Amelia put many half-blood Aurors up for promotion, but they never seem to get very far."

"What about muggle-born Aurors? Are there very many of them in the DMLE?" Hermione asked.

Susan bowed her head, as she said, "As far as I know, there isn't a single muggle-born witch or wizard working anywhere in the Ministry of Magic."

There was a thick silence in the dinning area and everyone around the table digested that information.

Finally Susan started talking again. "I know it's not fair, but it's tradition. It's the culture of the Ministry..."

"It's wrong." Said Harry firmly. "I don't know why I haven't noticed it before. But it seems to be true."

"When I had a new guardian appointed over me when I was eight years old, there were three candidates. All of them were listed in my parents Will as acceptable candidates. They all knew my parents and were equally qualified in my opinion. One was a half-blood with a 'minor' medical problem. The second one I guess you would call a mixed-blood – one of his parents was not a witch or wizard, but was still a magic being. The third person was from a pure-blood family and was subsequently appointed as my guardian. I didn't think

anything of it at the time, but it does look like that cards are stacked against the muggle-born. That is not acceptable. That is something that will have to change in the future. Why are they so prejudicial against muggle-born Susan?"

"I think one of the reasons is that there are so few of them. I mean, Hermione here is probable the only muggle-born witch to attend Hogwarts in the past five or ten years."

Harry and the others thought about what had been said for a few minutes before Harry turned to Neville.

"Okay Neville, you've heard what everybody else has said, what's your opinion on the subject? Remember, we're all friends here, you can speak freely."

Neville looked nervously around the room before he lowered his head and mumbled something.

"What was that Neville? I couldn't hear you." Harry said.

Sighing, Neville picked up his head, and said quietly, "I don't have an opinion on that subject... or almost any subject. My Gran was rather strong in her opinions, and didn't really even give me a chance to even think for myself. You just did what she wanted you to do and didn't ask questions. I think one of the reasons she didn't let me think for myself, was that until recently, almost everybody thought I was a squib. I mean, you saw how low my initial power reading was! 130! I mean, it takes at least a power reading of 110 to do even the most basic spells."

"Growing up I basically did what every my Gran told me to do. When I had any free time I would work in the greenhouse out back. I found it very relaxing being there with the plant. They didn't judge me. I learned that if you respected them and treated them well, they would respond to you and respect you."

"I guess if I had to give one answer to you question though Harry, it would be a lot along the same way as I view my plants... Respect. All classes of people deserve respect... at least until they've done something to change that, like that Malfoy boy, and his comments to Hermione. He has lost my respect as a wizard, and if anyone else had that same opinion of muggle-born, they would lose my respect

for them. Blood doesn't matter, the person matters and what they do with their ability."

By the end of Neville's statement, he was sitting up a little straighter and specking a little louder. He had a look on his face that was a combination of pride and surprise. He had made a statement, and people had listened to him without putting him down or telling him to be quiet, and it felt good!

"Well Neville," Harry started, "I think you'll find that with those power blocks off your core, your going to be able to state your own opinion, and not just sit back and have someone else do all the thinking for you."

Harry knew Neville had taken a huge step in that direction, but would need a lot of help in learning how to stand up for himself, by himself. Harry knew that having access to the larger magical core would help, but he would like to help Neville grow out of this shell he had been forced into over the last ten years.

For her part 'Ma' was putting together a list of books and exercises that would help Neville grow. She still felt like she was the Godmother of this young man and it was her responsibility to help him any way she could.

The rest of the 'week' in flextime was spent reading, talking and getting to know each other better. Harry showed each of them some exercises they could do on the equipment in the tent, and reviewed all the different charms they would be learning over the coming year, as well as the basic transfiguration's they would be learning. He noticed the girls were having a much easier time with the transfiguration's than the boys were. When Harry asked when the boys got their wands, both of them admitted that they had not gone down to Ollivander's to get their wands, but were using a brother's or a father's old wand.

"You do know that the wand chooses the wizard don't you?"

"Ya, but what are you going to do when there's no money left?" Ron asked.

Harry knew this would be an ongoing sensitive area for Ron, so he tried to tread carefully.

"Well, I know that's tough, but how about we get you and Neville working together when we get a greenhouse built down in chamber nine, and then grow some of the herbs that the apothecary needs, then you could sale to the stores to earn a little money. Then maybe by next year, you can get your own wand."

"That sounds great Harry, thanks."

As the outside clock got to 7:00 PM, Sassy informed Harry and the others that the students were starting to put their robes on and getting ready to pull into the train station.

The students returned to their respective rooms to get on their robes. Packing everything else in their trunks, Sassy took the trunks back out into the rail car compartment area.

After they had all left the magical tent, Harry deactivated the flextime runes, and they stepped out from chamber eight to their rail car compartment. Harry then shrunk his trunk down and placed in his pocket, then took down the privacy wards around the compartment. Just then the train stopped, and some of the older prefects were going around telling the students to leave their trunks on the train, that they would be taken up to the castle separately.

(AN – I am not going to attempt to write as Hagrid talks. I'll let those with real talent do that)

As they left the train, they heard a loud booming voice call out: "First years this way. All First years follow me." They looked up to see a mountain of a man holding a lamp over his head. Harry and the others made their way over to him. Harry said: "Hello Hagrid, it's good to see you again."

Hagrid looked down and smiled. "Harry! I glad to see you made it! I just know you'll have a great year here at Hogwarts. Now why don't you and your friends move on down the dock and get in the boats. No more then three per boat now and we'll be ready to leave in just a few minutes – Oh, and Harry, remember I expect to see you this weekend at my cabin. I have quite a few stories to tell you about your mum and dad."

"Thanks Hagrid I look forward to that. Do you mind if I bring some friends?"

"Of course not! The more the merrier."

"Okay, I'll see you this weekend then."

Harry and the others moved on down the dock to the waiting fleet of small boats. Harry, Neville, and Susan got in one boat, while Hermione and Ron were with another first year next to them.

By the time they were situated, Hagrid was coming down the dock with the last few first years.

"Everyone in and settled? Good. Now off we go!"

As the boats pulled away from the dock, Harry was thinking to himself; 'now the adventure begins.'

End Chapter 18

Next Chapter – What else has been going on?

Chapter 19 – What else has been going on?

Repost:

Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry – Infirmary – prior to the new term

The Headmaster had been under heavy sedation for the last week. Madame Pomfrey had diagnosed him with a simple case of exhaustion. It would appear that he hadn't been sleeping since Professor McGonagall informed him that Harry Potter's guardians has sent a reply back stating that Mr. Potter would in fact be coming to Hogwarts on September 1st.

Now that the students were to be showing up later tonight, Professor McGonagall needed the Headmaster to again take some of his duties back since she had to make sure that everything else was ready for that evening.

As she entered into the Infirmary early in the morning, Madame Pomfrey greeted her. "Professor McGonagall. Have you come to get the Headmaster up?"

"I certainly hope so Poppy. We're down to the last day and I have some things that I just have to get done before my classes start. How is he doing now?"

"He seems to be doing much better. He has stopped fighting the sedatives and has just let them do their job. I would think that if he were to get some normal rest in his personal chambers from now on, he will be fine."

"But Minerva, you really need to get him to talk about what is bothering him. We can't afford to have him falling apart with the children here."

"That's why I will be taking him back to his office this morning Poppy, to have a good long talk with him and to try to get whatever is bothering him, behind him."

"Well if you can't get him to talk about it, there are some mind healers at St. Mungo's that may be able to help."

"Thank you Poppy, you've been a great help."

Professor McGonagall waited until the sedative wore off of the Headmaster. As he started to wake up, she could see him toss and turn. "It was for the greater good...wasn't it?" She heard him said still in a half dream state.

Professor McGonagall gently shakes the Headmaster awake. "Albus? Albus we need to get back to work now."

"Ah – what? Oh Minerva. What am I doing in the Infirmary?" Professor Dumbledore asked.

"Don't you remember? You came into the Great Hall in a state of confusion and total disorientation. I brought you here, and Madame Pomfrey diagnosed you with a simple case of exhaustion, but you must take better care of yourself Albus. The students will be here this evening, and there is still much that needs to be done."

"I'll let you get dressed and then you and I are going up to your office and have a talk about just what is going on." There was no room for negotiation in Professor McGonagall's voice. The Headmaster knew he was going to get a talking-to from the Deputy Headmistress, and he knew he wasn't going to like it.

After leaving the Infirmary, the Headmaster and his Deputy made their way to his offices. Upon reaching the Gargoyles that stand as sentinels to the entrance of his office, the Headmaster gives the password ('Butterscotch'). After the Gargoyles have moved out of the way, they proceed on their way up.

"It feels so good to be back in my office. May I interest you in a Lemon Drop?" Professor was trying to stall as long as possible. But he should have known better than to try that with his Deputy.

"No, thank you Headmaster. Now if you're through stalling, I think we need to have a little talk as to what brought this 'exhaustion' on, don't you think Albus?"

Sitting defeated in his chair Professor Dumbledore knows that there is no getting out of this discussion.

"I'm afraid I've been a little unsettled since receiving word that Mr. Potter would indeed be coming to Hogwarts to school this fall."

"Why should that be troubling you Albus? I would have thought having Mr. Potter here is just what you wanted?"

Professor Dumbledore was quiet for several minutes resting his head on his steeped fingers. Finally, he looked up into the eyes of his most trusted friend. Tears were slowly creeping down the corners of his eyes as he addressed her.

"Let's start with my last encounter with young Mr. Potter. As you know, he had directed me to have the wards down around number Four Privet Drive no later than Midnight on September 11th. I intentionally did not show up until just after midnight to see just what he thought he could do to some of the most powerful wards outside of Hogwarts."

"I wasn't surprised at all when he met me out back, but what did surprise me was his request that I put up protective shields and privacy wards around the house, and again around the outside of the property line. After I had done so, Mr. Potter told me a little as to why he is so strong. It would appear that Lily and James had come up with a series of charms and exercises that allowed young Mr. Potter to expand, and then fill, his magical core. The fact of the matter was that he had been using the Blood Rune wards to help expand his core. He had indicated that this would be the last time they would be needed since he would be moving to another location as soon as some of the elves had things ready."

"What he did next was nothing short of amazing! First, he connected the four blood rune stones together, and then brought them to 'focus' on him. Next, he started to slowly draw the power from the stones towards himself. Then he did something I felt sure was impossible. He started to bring in all of the energy from the Blood Runes into himself until there wasn't enough power to keep the ward up. After the ward fell, Mr. Potter summoned all four of the Blood Rune Stones towards him at the same time. I saw him draw his sword, Durendal, and in one fluid motion he destroyed all four stones!"

"I saw the shock wave heading straight for me and thought for a moment I was going to die. Suddenly, a granite wall was in front of me – I hadn't placed it there, so that meant it had to be Mr. Potter's

doing. I was able to get a strong Protego shield up behind the wall just in time. When the shock wave hit the wall, I was thrown against the shield at the back of the yard, and would have been crushed if not for my own shield. The granite wall that had taken the brunt of the force was pulverized into fine dust. I know Harry would have been hurt much worse than I as I stood up and looked in his direction. I was not ready for what I saw."

"There, in the middle of the back yard, stood Mr. Potter. All of his clothes had been blown completely off of him. He just stood there, in the middle of the yard, head down, breathing as if he had just completed a difficult task, the sword still in his hand. BUT NOT A SCRATCH ON HIS BODY!"

"I had to try to subdue the boy to bring him here where I could study him and control both him and his powers."

"I let off four quick spells that would have been able to subdue a Hippogriff, but when I finished, all I saw was Harry looking back at me. Still standing, just more pissed off."

"He reminded me of how I had attacked him at Gringotts, and how he didn't respond. He turned and started coming towards me. It was then that I noticed his scar was shining a deathly green. Now its aura seemed to be spreading to encompass his entire body, now I felt that I was facing certain death."

"I found that I could not move, and when I looked into his eyes, all I saw was hate. The same type of hate another student used to show many, many years ago. It was a hatred for all things, magical and muggle. It was at this point that I wondered if I had made the same mistake with Mr. Potter and I had with Mr. Riddle all those years ago."

"He went to strike me down, and I found I was powerless to stop him."

"I had always considered myself ready for the next great adventure, but at that moment, I found myself lacking greatly. I had just been shown where I was lacking, and I had yet to do everything I could to resolve the conflicts in my life. I did not want to enter the next great adventure this way."

"As Mr. Potter went to lower sword through me, he was suddenly struck by what looked like a hundred killing curses causing him to drop the sword and sparing my life. When I went to give aid, he stopped me saying that he did not think he was safe to be around yet, and that I should just leave. His personal house elf – Sassy – came out next and was quite emphatic that I leave presently. She then helped young Mr. Potter into the house while levitating the sword inside."

"The next day I received a letter from him. In it he stated how sorry he was that the incident had taken place. He explained that there resides within him a fragment of 'Tom Riddle's' magical core – not a fragment of his soul, just a fragment of his core. It has been in him since the day Voldemort attacked and killed his parents. When Harry brought down the Blood Rune shield from around the house, he was forced to put some of the residual magic in to that part of his core. The results were that 'Tom Riddle's' core almost overcame Harry, and had it not been for Durendal, I would have indeed been killed."

"It seems that the display of magic that temporarily incapacitated Mr. Potter was Durendal's attempt to drain the power from the 'Tom Riddle' part of his magical core and placing a shield around it to try to isolate it. With any luck, it will be inoperable and someday, we can figure how to remove it from him."

"That young man has been walking around with a piece of the most terrible wizard in many years in his core, and because of an immature act, almost lost control of his mind and his magic. He would have been the next dark wizard; he would have been the next Tom Riddle."

"But there is a difference with Mr. Riddle and Mr. Potter. Riddle, I could control. I was more powerful, more knowledgeable, and had more experience. With Mr. Potter, I may have the knowledge and experience, but not the power. Not by a long way."

Professor McGonagall had been listening very intently. She knew something had happened the night but couldn't get the story out of either Professor Dumbledore, or Harry.

"When I heard Mr. Potter was indeed coming to Hogwarts it had a bizarre effect on me. For the first time since taking the position of

Headmaster at Hogwarts, there was the possibility that there would be a student that I would not be able to control or manage."

"How could I protect the other students if Mr. Potter gets out of hand? What if I did something that offended him? What if he retaliated? I don't know what to do Min; I just don't know what to do."

Professor Dumbledore drew quiet as he held his head in his hands and wept. Was that the only reason her friend for the last sixty plus years was so beside himself that he couldn't take care of his basic needs? Professor McGonagall thought there must be something more.

"Is Mr. Potter still in possession of Durendal?" Professor McGonagall asked.

"Yes, I believe he is Minerva, why?"

"Well, I would think from your little story it would be quite clear. As long as Mr. Potter is worthy to possess the sword Durendal, he will not go dark. Isn't that correct Albus? And as long as you are truly on the side of right, you will have nothing to fear from Mr. Potter. It is only when your actions are selfish, or dark that you have to fear him."

"Oh course you are correct." The Headmaster answered, not really listening to his Deputy.

"But that's not the reason you are afraid to have young Mr. Potter here this year is it Albus? You're still thinking about what happened three years ago, but now it isn't about him having you removed as the executor of his parents Will or his Magical guardian, it's about when he used Durendal to judge you – to judge the intents of your heart. You're still worried you won't pass another test if it came to that do you?" She asked.

"...Yes, alas to my own shame there are still many things that would cause me to fail a similar test today. And I am concerned that Mr. Potter would or could challenge me at a most inopportune time."

"When I met Mr. Potter at Gringotts three years ago it was to answer for things that I had sworn to do and yet, had not. I had prevented him, like his father from going to Gringotts and participating in the

Appointment of the Heir rites and rituals. I had been warned by the goblins that I should not interfere with these rites and rituals, lest dire consequences would befall me if I failed to perform my duty properly. Somehow, he managed to get himself to Gringotts and assume his rightful place as the head of the House of Potter."

"I must admit I was quite surprised to get a summons to Gringotts for a Board of Inquiry, and even more surprised to find out that it had, in fact, been called at the request of the proper Head of House. Remember? You were there with Filius and Remus." I was so sure that I knew what was right for everyone. Why should people be given the opportunity to make a wrong decision when I could prevent them from needing to do so? Wouldn't life be much easier if your decisions were already made for you? Yes, life would be so much easier."

Professor Dumbledore seemed to just drift into his own little world where nothing bad would happen because all of lives tough decisions were already been made for you by someone 'more wise' than they were.

"No Albus, life would not be easier. You know you grow best if you have to struggle against opposition. It's the struggle that makes you strong. Haven't you noticed if a tree is left out in the center of a field to get all the sunlight and water it can get, the root system doesn't grow very deep, and there are so many branches coming off of the tree that it weakens the wood. If a strong wind comes up, there is a very good possibility that the tree will break or become uprooted."

"But, if you have a sapling that is in a congested place, where it has to fight for sunlight and have the roots go deep to reach the water, it will grow slower, but when the winds come, it will have the strength in the wood and in the root to keep it strong and upright."

"It's the same with life. If we are given everything handed to us in life we learn little and grow even less, and have a very shallow reserve of strength and determination when hard time come. However, if we have to choose between what is right and what is wrong, and we learn to stick to our beliefs and decisions, and then are forced to face the consequences for our decisions, we develop deep reserves from which we can draw upon when times are hard."

"Now Albus, what gives you that right to make the decisions for others to make their lives less difficult? I seem to recall one of Mr. Potter's statements to you at Gringotts as being something to the effect: "You are not a god Headmaster; you do not know all things. You do not know the end from the beginning. You need to let the people make their choices and their mistakes. How do you expect them to grow if they do not?" Do you believe that now Headmaster?"

"I am afraid Mr. Potter was more correct than I wanted to admit at that moment in time. He has given me much to think about for these last three years."

"What did Mr. Potter mean when he said you had taken the free agency away from an entire generation? What was that about?"

Professor Dumbledore held his head down in shame thinking about the situation three years ago. Here was an eight year-old boy with almost no exposure to the wizarding world proving to be more 'wise' than the most 'knowledgeable' wizard in the world.

"I am afraid Mr. Potter is making reference to one of my other 'noble' decisions that I had presented to the Ministry of Magic soon after I had defeated Grindelwald. I had noticed that most of the people who had supported Grindelwald were those who were already magically stronger – on a whole – than the fighters for the light."

"I 'suggested' that each magical infant be tested at birth to see what their potential for magic would be. If they were found to be too strong – say have a power rating over 100, then bind their core so that it would in effect limit the core to one half its normal capacities. Needless to say the ministry was more than happy 'implement' my suggestion. The bind was designed to dissipate over time to by their seventeenth year; the bind would be completely off of the individual. With the rise of Voldemort, I 'suggested' that the power rating be lowered to 40."

Professor McGonagall was beside herself. She had noticed that the new students had a very difficult time doing any kind of magic when they first arrived. She had just attributed it to lazy students. But to hear that her 'friend' was the person responsible for their poor performance was almost too much for her.

"ALBUS DUMBLEDORE WHAT WERE YOU THINKING!"

"At the time, I must admit I was feeling a little bit like a 'god'. That I and I alone knew what was best for them all."

"I am afraid it is now quite clear that I was not thinking and that in fact I did not know what was best for anyone."

"In the one letter that I had received from Harry three years ago prior to him going to his new guardians, he told me that his parents had figured out about the core binding, and prevented it happening to him. He also suggested that if they could figure it out, other families could also. The obvious implication is that it would be the 'darker' families that would be more likely to remove any type of magical bind on their own children. He even provided a counter-spell to remove bind if one existed. It would seem that despite my best of intentions, I just might have been the one to put the 'light' in a more precarious position due to my 'insight'."

It was strange, but the more Professor Dumbledore confessed to Professor McGonagall, the more a weight seemed to be lifting off his heart and shoulders. A weight that had been there for so long that he had just come to accept it as a regular part of life.

But he knew this was just the first part of his own personal road to redemption. There was still the part about 'obtaining' the other Heir of the Founders key items and vaults. Dumbledore knew that it was not right for him to have these things. They were not his and – with the possible exception of the potion manuals from the heir of Slytherin – he had to return them.

But how could he bring himself to return the Gryffindor heirlooms to the Weasleys after he had 'held' them for the last one hundred years. He was sure that none of the current generation of Weasleys that even knew they were the heirs to Gryffindor.

He had 'held' Hufflepuff's chalice for even longer. He did not know how Madame Bones would react if he were to just hand it over to her without any explanation. Maybe young Harry would have a solution to these touchy problems... Yes, he would wait for Harry to come before worrying about these problems.

He was brought out of his thoughts when Professor McGonagall asked him: "Well Albus, you've had three years now to make changes and to rectify things. What steps have you taken to fix this?"

"Alas, to my shame, very little. I did go to Harry's Aunt and Uncle and pay them all the money they should have had for having Harry stay with them, and I did return the books, artifacts and keys that I had taken from the Potter vaults, but outside of that, very little."

"What about binding the new-born's magical cores? Surely you stopped that – didn't you?" Minerva asked.

For his part, Professor Dumbledore just looked down, into his lap, not responding to the question.

"Albus! What were you thinking!" Professor McGonagall yelled. "You knew what needed to be done over three years ago, and you sit there and do NOTHING? What's wrong with ya man? Are you daft? Or are you just too proud to admit you were wrong?"

Letting out a sigh of defeat, and coming back to the present, looked back up at the Deputy-Headmistress. "What? Oh, that... Of course I must contact the Ministry and the healers at St. Mungo's and have this practice stopped at once. Next we must find a way to remove the remaining binding from the students here at Hogwarts and in other areas that applied the binding. Lastly, we must see if there is a way to overcome the effects of the bind, and get the power level in the core to its proper level. I am thinking that perhaps our Mr. Potter may have come upon a solution to the problem in one of his mother's journals."

Professor Dumbledore came to the uneasy realization that he would have to make some major changes in his approach to many things and one of the first of these would be how he dealt with a certain young man who was proving to be able to take care of him self better then Albus could.

Later that morning – Hogwarts

The students would just be leaving from platform nine and three-quarters about now.

The classes were all prepared and the teachers all in place. Professor Dumbledore was in the teacher's lounge holding the last staff meeting before the students arrived when they all started to hear the noise.

It sounded like an old steam locomotive starting in the basement and moving up to the battlements. The room was shacking, and everyone was afraid that they were under attack.

Professor Dumbledore tried to assure all of the staff present that they were not under attack, none of the defensive wards had been tripped, and it would be impossible for any dark creature to come through and hurt them or Hogwarts.

"Duncan!" Dumbledore yelled over the increasing noise.

"Yes Headmaster? You are calling Duncan sir?" The proper looking house elf said.

"Do you know what that noise is Duncan? Can you tell us where it is coming from?" The Headmaster asked.

"Yes Headmaster. Just a few moments ago hundreds of house elves from the House of Ravenclaw appeared stating that their Master wanted Hogwarts restored back to its original glory. They are being told that they only have eight hours to do the work, or they will have to work at night quietly. Their master told them they could not take Hogwarts down first to repair it, but must leave it up right and inhabitable while they do their work.

At that moment, the door to the teacher's lounge blew open and a great wind rushed in. All the teachers were standing with their wands drawn, ready for action. But they were never attacked. What they saw however was marvelous to behold.

As the 'wind' passed over the stone, the grime and soot from a thousand years was removed from its pores of the stones. The stones were then re-surfaced and polished to a high luster.

All of the torches in the room were also completely re-worked. The metal was cleaned and polished; the wicks were all trimmed and re-lit. The old stain on the doors was stripped and new stain applied.

The pictures, statues, furniture, and armor were all cleaned, polished, and repaired before any of them complain about it.

"Duncan, can you please find the elf in charge of the renovations and have him report to me in my office?" Professor Dumbledore asked.

"Yes sir." Duncan answered, and with that, he was gone.

The Headmaster and the other head of houses went directly to the Headmasters office. A few moments after entering the office, Duncan was back with a very well dressed elf.

"Master Albus, this be Ty of the House of Ravenclaw." Duncan announced.

"Ah, Professor Dumbledore! My master told me you would probable want to talk to me. How may I be of service to you?" Ty said with a slight bow.

Professor Dumbledore was confused at the behavior of this house elf. He didn't act like a 'regular' house elf; he almost acted as if he were an equal with the renowned wizard.

"You and your other house elves will cease your work here and leave at once! Hogwarts has plenty of house elves that work hard to maintain and keep this building clean and in good repair. Your help is not required."

Ty seemed to smile just a little as if this type of a response. "I am afraid you have no say in the matter Headmaster. You are not the Master of the House of Ravenclaw, and at best are only a caretaker of Hogwarts physical appearance. My master is grateful for all you have done for the castle and grounds, but now that they are attending, they have given very strict instructions that Hogwarts is to be restored to its original beauty and luster. This is not a poor reflection on you or the house elves of Hogwarts; on the contrary you all are to be commended as to the overall good condition of the estate. Now, if you will excuse me, there is much work to be done."

With that, Ty disappeared and suddenly, the headmasters office to be reformed. The desk was reorganized, and cleaned with a new finish on it. Fawkes' stand was completely redone and made more

dignified and beautiful with a proper ashtray underneath to catch his ashes on burning day. For his part Fawkes let out a song of joy and flew around the room looking very pleased with his new stand.

The portraits of the former Headmasters and Headmistresses were cleaned, touched-up and straightened before they could complain; even the sorting hat was completely renewed and restored to how it would have looked a thousand years ago.

The bookcases were cleaned and reorganized; the armor cleaned and polished, the doors, walls, windows and torches renewed.

As quickly as it started, the activity seemed to end. The Headmaster and the other heads of house were looking around with awe and disbelief.

A cold snicker from Professor Severus Snape, head of Slytherin House, broke the silence. "That was almost as repulsive and annoying as some of those tricks Potter and Black use to play. What's this 'Heir of Ravenclaw' trying to prove? How much better they are than the rest of us? I'm just glad they will be sorted into your house Filius, and not mine. I will not play nurse maid to some spoiled 'Heir' even if they have not been at Hogwarts for who knows how long."

"I wouldn't be too sure Severus, being an heir of a house does not guarantee where someone will be sorted." Professor Flitwick responded. Both he and Professor McGonagall had seen Ty before, and knew for a fact who the 'Heir of Ravenclaw' was, but he just couldn't let such a good jab at Professor Snape pass by unanswered.

Just at that time, a beautiful white owl entering into the Headmasters office and flying around in a large circle interrupted the bickering. As Hedwig approached Fawkes location, she gave a hoot, which could have been interpreted, as 'I love what you've done to the place'. Fawkes, for his part just chirped back 'Thanks, and thank your master as well'.

Circling back around, Hedwig lit on the Headmasters desk and bowing her head, held out her leg with a letter tied to it. As the Headmaster reached for the letter, Professor Snape recognized the Snow White owl.

"Headmaster, isn't that the foul beast that made fun of you some years back?" He was reaching for his wand as if to be ready to blast the owl away as soon as it had delivered its message.

"I would put my wand away if I were you Severus. This owl has done nothing to you, and I am afraid you may not like her owners response if she were to be damaged in some way." Professor Dumbledore's tone of voice left no room for argument that this bird was not to be harmed.

"But Headmaster..."

"PUT. IT. AWAY. SEVERUS. I am doing you a favor." The Headmaster said strongly.

Grudgingly Professor Snape put his wand back into its holder.

Professor Dumbledore took the letter from Hedwig, who then stepped back a few paces, turning her head, it almost looked like she stuck her tongue out at Professor Snape, then turned her head back to the Headmaster, looking as if she were waiting for a response.

As Professor Dumbledore read the letter his hands began to shake. Setting the letter down, he quickly conjured some parchment and ink and made a quick reply to the letter. Folding it up, he tied it to the owl's leg and said, "I don't know if you will be able to get this to him before the train stops at Hogsmeade, but you should be able to get it to him as he crosses the lake in the boats. Why don't you rest in the owlery until then."

Hedwig hooted her appreciation, and flew back out the window.

"Headmaster what's the problem?" Professor Sprout asked.

"It would appear that Mr. Potter is invoking his right as Head of the House of Potter to call for two meetings after the Sorting ceremony and Welcoming feast. The first meeting will be with a group of students, one of their pets, some ministry officials and some other member of the wizarding community, including the heads of house. That meeting will be in this office. Following that meeting, Lord Potter has requested that a Board of Inquiry be called and held. He

has provided a list of goblins and wizards he wishes to attend this meeting. If everything goes as planned, a great injustice will be corrected tonight." Professor Dumbledore was feeling less than happy about the possibility of another Board of Inquiry at the beginning of the school year.

"LORD Potter is it? He's not even here and he's already more arrogant than his dead good-for-nothing father! Where does he get off calling himself a LORD when he's barely a child? All we need to do now is get LORD Potter and the 'Heir of Ravenclaw' together to form a mutual appreciation society club to see who can be the most spoiled! Mark my word Headmaster, if you do not put a stop to this... this... grandiose behavior before it is too late, these two spoiled brats will think they run this school and answer to no one!"

"Well, just get them into my class. I'll show them who the adults are. Now, if my services are no longer needed, I will be in my chambers until the Welcoming feast. And those muggle house elves had better not have cleaned up the potions class room!" With that Professor Snape turned throwing his robe behind him looking like a great bat exiting the room.

Before he made it to the door, Professor Dumbledore addressed him again.

"Professor Snape? We will need a vial of Veritaserum for some of this evening's activity. Would please make one available?"

Professor Snape turned back around, and with an emotionless expression on his face said: "Of course Headmaster." Then continued out the door.

"Is there anything I can do to help?" Asked Professor Sprout.

"No Pomona, but thank you for asking. Just please make yourself available for the first meeting after the welcoming feast." Professor Dumbledore replied.

Turning to his Deputy, Professor Dumbledore said, "Minerva, I need you to contact the goblins and Tiberius Ogden from the last Board of Inquiry. I know this is at the last moment, just explain to Goldridge and the others that this is important."

"I have to contact Madame Bones, Mad-eye Moody, Remus, and several other Minister Members and Aurors for the first meeting. I'll meet you later tonight for the Welcome feast."

Hours later – Out at the Boat Landing of Hogwart's Lake

"Everyone in and settled? Good. Now off we go!"

As the boats pulled away from the dock, Harry was thinking to himself; 'now the adventure begins.'

All the small boat's followed Hagrid's as they set out across the black looking water of the lake.

"The castle will be visible just around this corner." Hagrid called out to the others in the boats. As they continued, Harry felt them passing through the wards around Hogwarts. 'Oh, so that's why they do this... They want to get a magical 'fingerprint' or impression of everyone coming into the school. That should make it easier to tell who did what if there is an 'accident'.' Harry thought to himself. Harry also felt the castle acknowledge him as a Heir of one of the founder. When this was done, the Headmaster, and all of the house elves were also made aware of the fact that a heir of the founders would be in their mist. Harry asked the castle to please not 'identify' him to the headmaster, that he wanted to be treated as a normal student.

As the boats came around the bend, everyone let out a collective gasp – including Hagrid. Before them was the most beautiful castle any of them had ever seen. If you didn't know that Hogwarts had been standing for a thousand years, you would have thought it had just been built.

'Boy that Ty can really do some good work. I'll have to make sure he knows how much this is appreciated.'

The new students could not take their eyes off the castle. From the foundation that disappeared into the ground, to the uppermost battlements pointing skyward, the whole castle seemed to glow in the light of the crescent moon and the lights that were streaming out of the hundreds of windows.

End of chapter 19

Next chapter – The Sorting Hats Apprentice

Chapter 20 – The Sorting Hats Apprentice

Repost:

A/N – Most of the following is from book 1

The Welcoming Feast

As they neared the cliffs on which the castle stood, Hagrid yelled "Heads Down!" The boats made their way through a vine-covered entrance underneath the castle proper. As the boats docked, the excited first years got out and waited for Hagrid to lead them up a long set of stairs to a large oak door. Lifting his massive hand, Hagrid knocked three times.

The door opened to reveal a tall, stern looking witch in an emerald-green robe.

"The first years Professor McGonagall." Hagrid said.

"Thank you Hagrid, I'll take it from here."

Professor McGonagall then opened the door up the rest of the way and invited the children into the entrance hall. They followed her across the floor, and up a series of steps. They could hear the other students from the train ride already there in the castle somewhere.

Professor McGonagall ushered them into a small room just off the main hall and stopped. Turning around addressed the new arrivals. "Welcome to Hogwarts. The Welcoming feast will begin soon, but before it begins, you must be sorted into your respective houses."

"The four houses are Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each of these houses has a rich and noble history and all have produced both the famous, and the infamous over these long years. While you are here, your house will be like your family."

"Your accomplishments will earn you points, while your rule breaking will result in points being taken away from your house. At the end of the year, the house with the most points wins the House Cup so please do what ever you can to bring honor to your house. Now wait here quietly. I will be back in a few moments to come and get you for the sorting."

With that, Professor McGonagall left the room for a few moments. During that period of time, several of the ghosts from Hogwarts came by to introduce themselves to the new students. They were warned about the Poltergeist, Peeves. "Watch out for him! He likes to pick on first years!" one of the ghosts said.

Professor McGonagall came back into the room carrying a shiny, new pointed hat and a stool. "Come along now, form a straight line. Look sharp, and follow me!" she said.

As the doors opened, Harry and the other first years could see the Great Hall for the first time. All of the other students were sitting around four long tables. At the head of the hall, on an elevated stage, was a table with the instructors, Headmaster and guests were sitting.

"What's my aunt doing here?" Susan asked. "She didn't say anything about being here tonight! I hope everything is alright!"

"I guess we'll have to wait and find out after the dinner." Harry said.

"Look at that ceiling!" Ron said. "It looks just like the sky outside!"

"It bewitched. I read about it in 'Hogwarts, A History'." Said Hermione.

Professor McGonagall stopped the students at the head of the hall, then went up a little further, and sat the stool down, and placed the hat on top of it.

After a few moments, a rip near the brim opened wide like a mouth, and the hat began to sing:

(Insert your favorite song that covers the traits of each house, the fact that the sorting hat has seen it all, and knows where everyone will be sorted, and that there is a darkness gathering around the land, the students need to work together to overcome the evil. You may also want to include that one of the Heir's has returned and that Hogwarts has been returned to her earlier glory.)

When the sorting hat had finished, the entire hall erupted into applause.

Professor McGonagall came forward again and addressed the first years: "As I call your name, you will come up here and have the sorting hat placed on your head, and it will determine which house will be best for you.

"Abbott, Hannah".

A pink-faced girl came up tentatively and sat on the stool. The hat was placed on her head, and after a few moments, the hat shouted: "HUFFLEPUFF!"

"Bones, Susan!"

Susan stepped up to the stool and sat down. Professor McGonagall placed the Sorting hat on her head. After a few moments, it announced its decision: "HUFFLEPUFF!"

As Susan went to her new house, she turned around and waved at her aunt. For her part, Madame Bones nodded her head, and smiled at her niece.

The sorting went on like this for several more minutes with some of the new students being placed in the different houses. One of Harry's other friend, Hermione had been sorted into Gryffindor, while Neville was sorted in to Hufflepuff with Susan and Mr. Malfoy and his 'friends' had all gone to Slytherin.

Professor McGonagall looked down at her parchment and gave herself a brief smile. "Potter, Harry!" She called out.

The students in the hall broke out into whispers 'Did she say Potter', 'I thought he was dead'. 'Where has he been all these years?'

Harry ignored the noise and confidently stepped up to the stool.

As the sorting hat was placed over his head, Harry felt someone, or something start to probe his mind. In an instinct, he brought his Occlumency shields up to full strength, and activated all of his mental defenses. To the students looking at the sorting, all they saw a bright flash of light when the hat was placed on Harry Potter's head. When the flash cleared, a transparent shield had formed around Harry, the sorting hat and the stool. Even Professor McGonagall was pushed back as the shield came up.

Inside the shield, Harry was sitting – ready to fight whatever intruder had taken over the sorting hat.

In his mind, Harry heard something completely unexpected. 'Ma' was laughing... hard.

'Ma', just what's so funny?' Harry asked.

It took a few moments for 'Ma' to get control of herself.

'I guess we never told you just how a person is sorted into the different houses did we Harry?' 'Ma' said.

'Well, no. I just observed the other students putting the hat on their head, and then the hat announcing what house the student would go to.'

'Well, dear, the sorting hat looks through your mind and into your heart to determine which house will be most suited for you. You may be the only student in a thousand years that just shut out the sorting hat!' 'Ma' started laughing again, thinking that what Harry had just done was funny.

Slowly Harry brought down his Occlumency shields and 'mentally' took a look around.

'Ah... Hello there... Is anyone still around?' Harry asked tentatively.

Harry heard a little chuckling a few feet in front of him. Focusing his attention to where the noise was coming from, Harry saw a tall, well-built cheerful man leaning up against a wall.

'Well young Lord-Baron Potter-Ravenclaw, I am beginning to see why you are causing the Headmaster such grief and heartache. I have never seen a 'first year' such a magnificent magical core. I must admit, I have never had a first year who could occlude me from their mind, but you have done a fine job of building your shields.'

'But we seem to have a little bit of a problem here. You already know all the course work for all seven year and beyond; you possess in full measure, traits of all four houses, you are a child of

prophecy, and a Paladin in training. Quite a load for one so ... 'young'.'

'My name is Sir Robert Toppum.' The man said with a bow. 'I am the essences of the sorting hat. I was created a thousand years ago when Godric Gryffindor came up with a way to divide the incoming children in to the different houses. Each of the founders endowed me with enough of their personality and power to be able to judge which child would do best in which house.'

'Over the years, I became more knowledgeable and self-aware to where I developed my own personality.'

'Now the biggest problem I see right now is what House do I sort you into – since that is my main responsibility. Just based on your magical birthright, you are most suited for Ravenclaw. However, you do possess a large piece of Lord Slytherin's heir's core attached to your own. I also sense that your core has been effected decedents of Godric and Helga. I seem to feel Lily Evens close by... How is that possible?'

'Sir, please call me Harry. I will attempt to answer your questions as best as I can, but perhaps it would be better to introduce you to a few people who could probable answer the questions better then I.' Harry suggested.

Leading Sir Toppum to 'Potter in the Mind' where 'Ma' and Durendal were currently waiting.

'Sir Robert Toppum, may I introduce you to 'Ma' – the essences of my Mother, Lily Evens Potter, and Durendal – the essences of the great sword of power of which I am the current custodian.'

Sir Toppum bowed deeply to both 'Ma', and Durendal, who curtsied, and bowed (respectfully) back to Sir Toppum.

'Lady Evan-Potter, I remember you well. Such an eager young mind so willing to learn. I almost put you in Ravenclaw. If not for your adventures spirit, I would have placed you there instead of Gryffindor.'

Turning to Durendal, Sir Toppum bowed again, lower. My old master Lord Gryffindor heard much of the great sword of power Durendal of

Roland. You inspired him to craft the sword of Gryffindor, but nothing could match the power and majesty of the great sword of Roland. My Lord cried many days when he heard of your master's demise, and lamented the loss of such a fine weapon in the fight for truth and justice. I am glad to see that there is again someone worthy to hold the sword Durendal of Roland.'

'You honor me Sir Toppum, but please remember, I am now Durendal of Potter, for he has truly passed through many trials to have the right to claim me his. I perceive that there are still many items that need to be talked about regarding where young master Harry is to be trained while he is here at Hogwarts. Might I suggest that we all retire to 'Potter in the Mind', where for every hour that passes there, but two minutes pass in the 'outside' world?'

'What a splendid idea!' Sir Toppum replied. As they head up the path to 'Potter in the Mind', Sir Toppum turns back to Harry and says: 'Thank you young Lord Potter for rejuvenating my hat. I haven't felt this young in several centuries.'

'It was my pleasure Sir Toppum, it was my pleasure.'

Meanwhile back in the main hall

It had been several minutes since Harry Potter had sat on the stool and placed the sorting hat on his head. By this time the Headmaster, along with the other heads of house, and the Ministry officials had all gathered around the stool and the shield that surrounded it.

"Well Filius, what can you say about this shield?" The Headmaster asked.

"It is a most peculiar shield. It seems to be a privacy shield, as well as a blocking shield to prevent outside influences, be they physical, mental, or magical from penetrating this area. Most unique, but where did the shield come from? It seemed to flair into existence as the sorting hat was placed on Mr. Potter's head, and shows no sign of going away anytime soon."

"Is Lord Potter still alive in there? He doesn't seem to be moving and his eyes are closed." Asked Madame Bones.

"As near as I can tell, Mr. Potter is just in a trance of some sort. I am sure everything will be well enough when this is over." The Headmaster stated.

"Yes Headmaster, but how long will it go on for?" Asked a slightly panicking Professor McGonagall. She hadn't been able to move since the shield came into existence. It was mainly out of fear. That was her 'ward' under that shield.

"I'm sure it won't be much longer Minerva." The old Headmaster answered with a twinkle in his eye.

"Huh!" Professor Snape said, making sure the rest of the quiet hall could hear him. "This is nothing more than a stunt to draw attention to himself. I don't know who is worse about it ... His worthless dead father James, or those pathetic Weasley twins."

Gryffindor table drew tense at the head of Slytherin house's comment regarding some of their past and current members.

"I would be very careful how you address yourself on that issue Severus, you may find yourself having to answer for them one day." Professor McGonagall stated coldly.

"Oh please Minerva! Just what do you think is going to happen? Do you think young Mr. Potter here is going to curse me for calling him on his little stunt here? Or that these Weasley's are smart enough or well trained enough to challenge me to a duel? Let me tell you, I would look forward to something like that." Severus said with a sneer on his face.

"Now Professor Snape, you know it is very improper to issue a challenge to students during the school year. It is greatly frowned upon." Said Professor Dumbledore.

"Not to mention that it borders on baiting a minor into an illegal duel." Said Madame Bones, adjusting her monocle as she looked sternly at Professor Snape.

Meanwhile over at the Gryffindor table, Fred and George Weasley were so red it looked as if they could light a piece of parchment on fire if it touched their skin.

At the same time, they were entertaining different pranks and methods of retribution they could inflict on their potions teacher this year as only twins could do.

Still in the line, waiting to be sorted was their little brother Ron. They could tell that he too wanted some retribution on the potions teacher. They were actually quite surprised that Ron had held his tongue so far. He had always been the 'short fuse' in the family. They were just glad he wasn't making a show.

While the bickering and backbiting continued, few noticed when the shield around Harry and the stool came down. That all changed when the Sorting Hat opened its brim again to speak, after clearing its 'throat'.

"For the first time in a thousand years I have found a candidate that would be perfectly matched for all four houses." The sorting hat began. Everyone quickly quieted down and listened intently to what the sorting hat had to say.

"After taking all items and issues into account, I – the Sorting Hat – as you call me – but also know as Sir Robert Toppum by the founders, invoke the Rights of the Founders, and select Harry James Potter as my apprentice for the next seven school years."

"I accept." Harry said, and with that, a magical bond was formed between the hat and Harry.

The hall was completely silent for several seconds while the magnitude of the statement sunk in to everyone, then, as if on queue, everyone seemed to start talking all at once.

Professor Snape was swearing and complaining to the Headmaster that Harry must have bewitched the sorting hat to come up with such a ridiculous statement.

Madame Bones had to pick up her monocle when it fell out of her eye when she opened it up as wide as she could.

The students were talking to each other wondering just what being an apprentice meant.

Finally Professor Dumbledore brought silence to the room as he raised his wand and shooting a cannon-blast into the air.

"SILENCE!" The Headmaster yells. "We will finish this discussion in my office after the Welcoming feast. For now, let us finish with the sorting.

To everyone's surprise, it was the sorting hat that spoke next, "Thank you Headmaster. For the first two years, Mr. Potter will attend his classes as a part of the House of Gryffindor. After that, the next two years will be with the House of Hufflepuff. Then two years as a member of the House of Ravenclaw. And finally, his last year will be spent in the House of Slytherin."

"HE MOST CERTAINLY WILL NOT!" Exploded a livid Professor Snape.

"He most certainly will, Professor Snape!" The sorting hat retorts. "But that will not be your concern for at least the next six years. Now if you will remove me from Mr. Potter's head, we will finish the sorting. Mr. Potter, if you will please join your house mates at the Gryffindor table."

Harry did as he was told, and was immediately welcomed by the other students, especially Hermione.

"Well, at least we'll have you for a few years." Hermione said.

Few people were paying attention to what was going on with the rest of the sorting, so Harry was a little surprised when Ron came and sat down next to him.

"Boy mate, you sure know how to liven up a party." Ron said.

That got everyone laughing.

By now, the sorting was finished, and Professor Dumbledore was standing back up trying to get every ones attention.

Professor McGonagall tapped her leaded crystal glass to get the students attentions.

Everyone looked up as Professor Dumbledore beamed at the students.

"Welcome!" he said. "Welcome to a new year at Hogwarts! Before we begin the banquet, I would like to say a few words, and here they are Nitwit! Blubber! Oddment! Tweak!"

"Thank you!"

As Professor Dumbledore sat down, the student clapped and cheered wildly. Just then, the serving platters on the tables filled with the grandest feast Harry had ever seen.

As Harry started filling up their plates, he was hearing Ron mutter something under his breath.

"What was that Ron?" Harry asked.

Ron jerked his head up and stopped talking when Harry talked to him. "Oh," he blushed, "I was just thinking how badly I want to get that stupid Professor Snape!" he said through gritted teeth.

"Why? What happened? What did I miss?"

"Well, in case you didn't know, there was some type of shield that went around you and the stool as soon as the sorting hat was put on your head." It was Hermione explaining the situation. "By the way, what did happen up there Harry?"

"Later Hermione, I want to hear why it seems all the Weasley's are so upset."

"Okay, well, when that shield went around you, all of the guests, the heads of house and the Headmaster came down to see if you were alright. Then one of the professors, Professor Snape, according to some of the other students, said that you were just doing that to get attention just like your..." Hermione blushed, and lowered her head.

"My what Hermione?" Harry asked.

"Like your ...'worthless dead father James, or those pathetic Weasley twins'." It was Ron who finished the sentence.

Harry looked at Ron and then the Weasley' s twins and met their shade of red color for color.

"Ron," then Harry looked at the twins, "Ron's brothers..."

"Fred." The first one said.

"George." Said the other one.

Harry nodded a response. "Don't do ANYTHING to that man until after we talk. I want to make sure the punishment fits the crime." There was a very cold edge in Harry's voice. It was so cold the twin's couldn't help put an equally cold grin on their faces as well.

"I have read in some of my parent's journals that there use to be a group called 'The Marauders' that would pull pranks here at back in the seventy's, and one of their favorite targets seemed to be one Severus Snape."

"The Marauders!" Fred almost shouted.

"They're our idols!" continued George.

"It's always been"

"Our goal to perform"

"A prank worth"

"Of being compared"

"To them!" they finished off together.

"Well then it's a good thing that I have all of their working journals isn't it?"

Fred and George had a look of shock on their face. They looked at each other, then back to Harry, then back to each other. Finally, they stood up, stepped over the bench, kneeled down in front of Harry and started bowing and saying: "We're not worthy! We're not worthy! We're not worthy!"

The people at the Gryffindor table were laughing at the antics of the Weasley twins. The rest of the hall couldn't make up their minds what was going on, and just ignored it.

"Oh, stop it you two. This has to be done professionally, when the victim least expects it. Being from Gryffindor, Professor Snape will be expecting you to attack as soon as the meal is over. He will be confused when the attack doesn't come. More than likely, he will think you are afraid to attack, and will probably bait you even more during the coming weeks. It is very important that you DO NOT take any action against him. I know it will be hard, but just think of this way; with every act of aggression and humiliation, the prank just gets bigger and bigger, and bigger."

"I like the way you think Harry."

"It may not be very 'Gryffindor'."

"But it will get results!"

"Stop it you two! Do you always finish off each other's sentences?"

"Yes!" They both said.

"Harry you can't be serious!" Hermione said. "Attacking a teacher could get you and the twins expelled!"

"We won't be attacking a teacher Hermione. We are showing a bully that they can't walk all over people by hiding behind their position. It also seems that Professor Snape needs to get over whatever issues he had with my father, and not transfer them to me. To my knowledge, this is the first time I have met the man, and yet he has a deep-seated hatred for me. Can you explain why Hermione?"

"Well, no, but maybe you should try to find out what the problem is before you plan your retaliation."

Harry thought about that for a few moments. It would probably be better to try to understand the man a little before he used him to wipe the hallway with him.

"Okay Hermione, I'll try to see why he has such a hatred for me. If it can't be resolved, or if he will not reform his actions, the pranks are on!"

"Oh, Harry, you can't!"

"Hermione! This doesn't concern you! Just drop it for now! You don't have to be involved, and you won't have to know anything about it." Harry said coldly.

Hermione looked a little hurt, but just sat in her chair and played with the food on her plate.

"I'm sorry Hermione, I promise, no one will get hurt, and I will try to find a 'peaceful' solution to the problem before anything is done."

Hermione smiled sadly, and went back to playing with her food.

Harry looked back at the head table to get a better look at the professors. Professor's McGonagall and Flitwick he already knew. Professor Dumbledore was easy to spot. Further down the table was a skinny little grease ball with a hooked nose sitting next to a strange man with a tunic on top of his head. 'That must be Professor Snape' Harry thought. Just then, the little grease ball looked up from his plate and stared right at Harry. Almost immediately, a sharp pain shot across Harry's scar. At the same time, Harry felt the 'Tom Riddle' part of his core start to awake and try to get out from the shield that held it.

'Harry! Look away! Bring your Occlumency shields up to full strength! You can't afford Riddle's core getting any stronger and breaking out of its shield!' 'Ma' was as nervous as Harry had every heard her.

Harry quickly did as his 'Ma' asked him to do. He dropped his head down, closing his eyes, and concentrated on keeping his shields up, and getting the 'Riddle's' core fragment under control. For Harry, the rest of the room just disappeared, and he was all alone in his own world. He concentrated on strengthening the shield around the contaminated part of his core, and keeping everyone out of his mind.

Several seconds or several days could have passed as far as Harry knew before he was brought out of his concentration by Hermione shaking his arm.

"Harry? Harry! Are you all right? The feast is about over and you haven't finished your desert."

"Thanks Hermione, I'm just not very hungry anymore."

Harry checked his shields one more time before he became fully aware of the activity in the Great Hall.

Finally, the feast ended and Professor Dumbledore stood back up to address the students.

"Now that we are fed and ready to retire, there are a few beginning-of-terms announcements that need to be made."

"The Forbidden Forest is exactly as it says, forbidden to all students. There are many dangers in the forest that can be most unpleasant if you happen across them. Also, Mr. Finch has asked me to remind you that all magic is forbidden in the hallways. In addition, a list enumerating all forbidden items is attached to Mr. Finch's office door."

"Quidditch trials will be next week. Contact Madame Hooch or your Head of House to sign-up."

"One other matter to bring up – The third-floor corridor on the right-hand side is out of bounds to everyone who does not wish to die a very painful death."

"With that out of the way, could we please have the prefects show the new students to their respective common rooms – with the exception of Mr. Harry Potter, Mr. Ron Weasley, Miss Hermione Granger, and Miss Susan Bones. They will please come to the front table. Thank you and good night!"

"Why are we being called up here Harry? I know you have a meeting with the Headmaster after what the sorting hat said, but why us?" Ron asked.

"Maybe he heard you plotting against Professor Snape and wants to put a stop to it before it can get started." Hermione answers.

"Then tell me 'O wise one', why is Susan being included?" Ron asks.

"Oh... I don't know. Harry why are we being call up to the head table?"

"Each of you were present when Ron tried to turn his pet rat yellow remember?"

"Ya, so?" Ron asked.

"I noticed something when you did that and I think it is very important to show the others. You'll see what I mean in just a few minutes."

Harry was getting very nervous at this point. If what he thought was correct, a great injustice would be corrected tonight and he would have his 'official' godfather back. He had to act as normally as possible. If 'Scabbers' became aware of what he was really trying to do, he might try to escape, and if he told the other children, they might think he WAS crazy, or as Professor Snape put it, an attention seeking, arrogant child.

As the children approached the head table, Susan ran over to meet her Aunt. The rest of the children just waited to see where the Headmaster would take them.

"Are we all here now? Good! Let's go up to my office to take care of a few items of business Mr. Potter has asked to show us."

The Headmaster turned and started to lead the rest of them to his office. Out of the corner of his eye, he notices that Professor Snape is also moving with them up to the office.

"Professor Snape? Since none of these students are in your house, I do not believe your presents will be required tonight. Why don't you make sure all of the new students are situated in their new accommodations?"

"I am sure the Prefect's are capable have performing their duties Headmaster. I wish to see what item this pompous, arrogant, spoiled

child could possibly have that would require the attention of the Headmaster, and the Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement."

Professor McGonagall stopped in her tracks, pulled out her wand, and stuck it HARD into the chest of Professor Snape.

"Careful Minerva," Snape said coldly, "One might get the opinion you wished to dual me?" He raised one eyebrow as if to prove some point.

"You will hold a civil tongue in your head when addressing a student. You may be a professor, but that does not give you license berate or belittle them."

Harry gave Hermione a quick look. Hermione for her part just looked down at the floor.

"If you give in to each of their little flights of fancy, you will just be diluting yourself and them as to how the real world works. I think you should nip these excursions in the bud as quickly as possible, and remind these 'children' that life is hard, and they don't always get what they want just by asking for it."

"That will be enough Severus." The Headmaster said, "Goodnight."

Professor Snape knew a dismissal when he heard one. Glaring at the Headmaster, and then at Harry, he turned, as only he could, and walked away from the group looking every bit the part of a large bat.

"My apologies young students, I will talk to Professor Snape to see that this does not happen again." The Headmaster said.

As they reached the Gargoyles that stood outside the Headmaster's office, Professor Dumbledore gave the password, and they all went up into the office.

As they entered the room, the students were surprised to see still other people in the room.

Fawkes lifted his head from underneath his wing and looked at the group of people coming into the room. On seeing Harry he started to

sing, and flying around the room. He came and lit on Harry's shoulder, and rubbed his head against Harry's.

'Welcome young fledgling. I sense a kindred spirit in you. I look forward to talking and training you.'

"Mr. Potter, I see you have already met Fawkes, though I am quite surprised. I have never known him to go and greet any other person then myself."

"I believe you asked for some additional people to attend this meeting? For the benefit of the other students, may I introduce Remus Lupin, retired auror Alastor Moody, and Wizengamot Elder Tiberius Ogden. Now, what exactly did you want to show us?"

"First, thank you for calling this meeting headmaster, I do know it is a little out of the ordinary, but I believe when you see what I have to show you, you will admit, it is quite important. Second, could I have one of the house elves go and get Ron's pet rat? It should be in a cage by his school supplies."

"Mr. Weasley do you wish your pet to be brought here?"

"Ya I guess, I mean, it's not a very good rat, and it's not a very good trick." Ron said.

Calling Duncan, Professor Dumbledore had him go and get the cage that had the old gray rat. Scabbers was still sleeping in his cage, and didn't even bother to move.

"Thank you," Harry said. "These students were in the rail car compartment when Ron first tried this spell that he had received from his brothers. Ron if you please?"

Being somewhat embarrassed, Ron took the old rat out of its cage and tried the spell again – with the same results.

"Thank you Ron, now could you please put Scabbers back into the cage, I don't want anything bad to happen to him." Harry's heart was racing a hundred miles a minute, but he had to stay calm on the outside.

"Mr. Lupin, according to my parents journals you had some friends here at Hogwarts that did something very spectacular so that they could be with you on certain evenings. Could you please tell us what that was?"

Remus looked at Harry with a questioning look on his face.

"My three closest friends discovered that I suffer from Lycanthrope."

Hermione gasped, Susan and Ron just shook their heads. They had heard about Remus from their families.

So to help me during those times of a full moon, they became illegal Animagus. James Potter, your father, was a stag, Sirius Black was a large black dog and Peter Pettigrew was a ..." Remus paused. He looked at the cage, his eyes grew cold as steel and he grit his teeth as he said: "Rat!"

The light of understanding come on for the Headmaster as he now understood what Harry was leading up to. But like a good Ravenclaw, he was building a case one layer at a time. Professor Dumbledore remembered 'Mad-eye' Moody telling him that there where signs of a rat animagus at the Potters ten years ago on the night of the attack. He heard 'Mad-eye' give a little chuckle as he too realized what Harry was doing. 'Mad-eye' now had his wand out, trained on the Rat in the cage.

"Auror Moody, it is my understanding that you were the lead investigator that went to Godric's Hollow after Voldemort's (Several people jumped at the mention of the name) attack on my family. Would you be so kind as to repeat your findings?"

"Gladly young man."

"When I arrived at Godric's Hollow, the house was barely standing. On the first floor, you could tell that your ol' man put up quite a fight. There were only two other magical signatures in that room. One, a weak stunning spell that was shot to the back of James, by someone who could change himself into a Rat, and then the 'AK' that killed you Dad." During the entire time, 'Mad-eye's 'eye', never left the cage and the rat inside.

"Thank you sir. Madame Bones? Have you been privy to a set of memories in an auror style pensive showing the selection of the Potter's secret keeper, and the attack on Godric's Hollow?"

"Yes I have."

"In your opinion, based on what you have seen, was Sirius Black the secret keeper for the Potters?"

"No he was not."

"Who was the secret keeper?"

"Peter Pettigrew."

Professor Sprout, who had come up with Susan, Professor McGonagall, and Remus Lupin all found a chair to sit down in. Remus didn't know if he could take it much longer. For the last ten years he had thought that his best friend had betrayed James and Lily, and now all of that was about to change – hopefully for the better.

"Madame Bones, was Sirius Black given a trial before being placed in Azkaban?"

"No, He was not." She said lowering her head.

"Why not?" Harry asked.

"It seemed at the time that he was beyond guilty. He was found at the scene of the Pettigrew attack, laughing madly, saying something like 'He pranked us all'. Several of the witnesses stated that it was Peter who asked Sirius why he had betrayed your family. The courts were backed up with other cases, and so he was sent directly to Azkaban."

"Was Peter Pettigrew's body every found?"

"No. Just a small part of his left ring finger."

"Was Sirius' wand ever tested to see what spell he had cast?"

"... No, it wasn't."

"Getting back to the body part that was found as the remains of Peter Pettigrew. If a person has a body part missing, is that carried over into their animagus form?"

"To the best of my knowledge, yes."

"Madame Bones, would you please be so kind as to check the left paw of this rat."

"It seems to be missing one of its digits."

"Madame Bones? If you have known that my godfather innocent, why couldn't you have him released?"

"This was a matter for the Wizengamot to pursue. But without the body of Peter Pettigrew, it would have been impossible to have his sentence reversed."

Harry lost it. "SENTENCE! WHAT SENTENCE! THERE WAS NO TRIAL SO THERE COULD BE NO SENTENCE!" His magic flared, and anything not nailed down started to shake.

'Careful Harry! You've come so close don't make a mistake now!' 'Ma' encouraged.

Closing his eyes, and taking several calming breathes, Harry centered himself, and drew his magic back into his core. Those who had not seen what Harry was capable of were shocked at the display of raw magical power.

"I apologies, I let myself get carried away."

"Madame Bones, Lord Ogden, if you had the body of Peter Pettigrew, how long do you think it would take you to be able to have Sirius Black released?"

"Well," began Tiberius Ogden, "As soon as Madame Bones is satisfied that the person is truly Peter Pettigrew, and writes an affidavit to that effect, and then a separate writ calling for the release of Mr. Black, and that writ is signed by the head of the Wizengamot – that would be you Albus, and witnessed by another member of the

Wizengamot – I guess that would be me, then I say he could be released almost immediately."

"Headmaster, could you please expand this cage to accommodate the size of a man, and ward it, so that if, this rat is indeed an animagus, that he can not revert back to his form?

"Yes, Harry." Professor Dumbledore said meekly. Harry looked up at him with fire in his eyes. He hadn't done anything to earn the right to call him by his first name. But he let it go. Harry was too close to getting his godfather back.

"Thank you Headmaster. Auror Moody, would you please cast the animagus reveal spell at Scabbers?"

"With pleasure." 'Mad-eye' Moody steps forward and cast the 'animagus revelo' spell on Scabbers. Immediately where once a gray, worn rat had been, laid a short, round, worn 'rat' looking man.

Being transfigured from his animagus state to his human state woke the little man up. Upon seeing where he was, he first tried to change back into a rat and escape his cage. When he found he could not change back, he reached into his old molding coat and pulled out two wands, but he was too slow to use them."

"STUPEFY! PETRIFICUS TOTALUS! INCARCEROUS!" The Headmaster had proven just how fast he could be with his wand.

"Thank you sirs." Harry said. He was breathing hard, trying his hardest to keep his emotions under control. After a few moments he continued.

Turning to Madame Bones he said, "You will notice that he has two wands. If you have them tested, you will see that one of them belongs to Peter Pettigrew, the other belongs to Tom Riddle, also know as Voldemort." The occupants in the room with the exception of Professor Dumbledore, 'Mad-eye' Moody, and Remus Lupin all jumped when Harry made this revelation.

Remus had not heard what Harry said about the ownership of the wands. His attention was on the little man in the cage currently bound in ropes. There was Peter Pettigrew right before his eyes.

The feeling of hate that he currently had for that rodent of a man was almost overwhelming.

He was the cause of James and Lily's death. He was the cause of Harry being an orphan. He was the cause of Sirius being held in Azkaban prison for the last nine and a half years. He was just wishing it were either one-week earlier, or three weeks later so he could 'greet' his old friend as a werewolf.

Meanwhile, Professor Sprout had levitated Peter into an upright position, while Professor McGonagall had conjured a chair to fasten him on. Madame Bones had gone into the cage and collected the two wands, and makes sure there are no other magical items on him such as a portkey.

The other students in the office where stunned silent. Both Susan and Hermione where shocked to see a rat turn into a person, and Ron was shocked / mad that the family 'pet' that they had had in their home for almost the last ten years was responsible for one of the greatest tragedies in modern wizarding time.

When everyone was ready, Professor Dumbledore administered the veritaserum to Peter, and revived the little man. "Hello Peter, we haven't seen you for a long time."

"Pr... Professor Dumbledore! Professor McGonagall! James? Is that you?"

Remus snapped. Running forward he hit the cage - now cell as hard as he could. "HOW COULD YOU PETER? HOW COULD YOU BETRAY JAMES AND LILY?"

"Re...Re... Remus? Remus my old friend! Please, Please you have to help me!"

"Help you? Right now I'd like nothing more then five minutes with you on a full moon. I would make you pay for what you've done."

"But Remus, it didn't have to happen that way! My Lord had promised me that if I could get him the Potter men, Lily could be mine. Don't you see? She was always so nice to me... She loved ME not HIM. He made her marry him. It wasn't her chose! Then they had that little brat! He never liked me. He'd always laugh when you

or Sirius held him, but he would cry anytime I got close. Remember all those things that happened at his first birthday party?"

"Lily was nice to everyone Peter, even Severus! Does that mean she was meant to marry Snape? NO! Lily was a kind and loving person to everyone, even you! But she loved James. And when she gave birth to Harry, I had never seen either of them happier."

"Do you really think Lily would be with you after seeing you and Voldemort kill her husband and son? NEVER!" Remus started going at the cage again trying to find some way to get in to finish off this rat of a man.

"STUPIFY!" The spell from 'Mad-eye's wand was fast and true. Remus fell in a mound on the floor.

"Well, it was either that or wait until he found a way to kill him, and have to take him to Azkaban." 'Mad-eye' said as he shrugged his shoulders.

Harry was having a very hard time keeping his feeling in check. He could hear his 'Ma' crying in his mind. That mixed with the exchange Remus has just had with Peter brought Harry very close to the edge himself. He had to keep reminding himself that his 'mission' was not completed yet.

"One moment Madame Bones, Headmaster." Harry said with a false sense of calm.

Turning back to the cell, Harry addressed its occupant.

"Is your name Peter Pettigrew?"

"Yes."

"Were you the secret keeper of James and Lily Potter?"

"Yes."

"Has Sirius Black ever been a Death-eater?"

"Sirius? A Death-eater? Never!"

"Are you a Death-eater?"

"... Yes."

"What happened on the street when Sirius has you cornered?"

"Oh, that was one of my proudest moments. I was finally able to get the drop on the great Sirius Black!"

"When Sirius caught up with me, I found that I couldn't apparate out of the street. I had already used the portkey that my master had given me to escape him once. It seemed that no matter where I went, Black was right behind me! I guess that was the 'dog' in him."

"The street was filled with muggles, but I knew it was only a matter of time before the aurors would be there. I thought fast, and started yelling as loudly as I could about how Sirius had betrayed the Potters to the Dark Lord, and how the Potters had trusted him. I knew Sirius was confused when I started talking like that, because we both knew I was the traitor."

"I still had to make my escape, and that's when I say it! In the middle of the muggle street were a series of round metal lid embedded in the road. One said 'sewer', one said 'water', and the last one said 'gas'! I knew if I could hit the 'gas' line I could cause an explosion that if I were lucky enough, would finally kill Black, and maybe get rid of some of the muggles as well!"

"I still had the aurors to worry about, I couldn't let them catch me even after Black was taken care of, so I decided to 'leave' a little bit of me behind. I first blasted the gas line that tore up half the street and broke open the sewer line. I had to cut off one of my fingers, then transfigure into my animagus form, and find a wizarding family employed in a low-level ministry position, so I could keep up with the information and listen for my lord's return!"

"I found a gullible wizarding family some distance from London and have been staying there ever since."

While Peter was saying this, his countenance went from stuttering fool, to a complete manic just waiting for the return of Voldemort.

The room was completely still at Peter's confession.

Ron was feeling anger and loss at the same time. Anger that this, this thing had used his family for the last nine plus years. Plus feeling the loss at having one of the few things that was 'his', taken away from him.

"Does anyone else have a question for the prisoner at time?" The Headmaster asked.

Not receiving any feedback, Harry stepped in front of Madame Bones.

"Madame? Are you satisfied that this is Peter Pettigrew?"

"What? Oh, yes, of course Lord Potter."

"Do you feel Sirius Black is guilty of any of the charged leveled against him?"

"No, no of course not Lord Potter."

"Then Madame Bones, do you intend to arrest Mr. Pettigrew and release Mr. Black?"

"Yes, Lord Potter! At once!"

"Then Madame Bones? I want my godfather back... now!"

Madame Bones was in so much shock from the activities of the night that she didn't notice the tone of finality Harry had placed in his 'request' / order.

"Yes, ... Yes, of course. I am quite satisfied that this, this thing is in fact Peter Pettigrew. Let me prepare the writs for Professor Dumbledore and Lord Ogden to sign."

'Mad-eye' Moody spoke up at this time to talk to Harry. "Ya know Harry, as soon as we knew there was a problem, Madame Bones had me take steps to insure that Sirius wouldn't go crazy. I've had a house elf taking care of him these last three years to help him get his mind back. Here, let me call him so he can tell you how your godfather is doing. Simons!"

In a moment, there was a proud looking house elf with a Ravenclaw emblem on his robe in front of Mr. Moody.

"Yes, Master Moody, you called?"

"Yes Simons. This young man is Harry Potter, Sirius Black's godson. Could you please tell him how Sirius is now?"

"Certainly sir." Simons knew who Harry was; after all, he had been making reports to him on Sirius' condition over the last three years. He also knew that Harry wanted to keep his Identity as Lord Ravenclaw secret for as long as possible.

"Master Black has been making good progress since Master Moody installed the 'white-noise' dementor box. Though his physical and mental faculties are good, he is feeling very bad that he cannot be with you. He wishes more than anything to be able to fulfill his responsibilities as your godfather."

"Thank you Simons. Could you possibly go back and tell my godfather that he will be seeing me tonight? We have caught the Peter, and I plan on making sure he gets out of here as quickly as possible."

'Mad-eye' remembered Harry's little trick at Gringotts three years ago. He still didn't know how he had done it, but he didn't think he could do the same thing at Azkaban.

"Harry, Azkaban is unplottable, you can't apparate or portkey to it, even if you had its location on a map. It also has some of the strongest wards around it for a reason. If a witch or wizard were just able to apparate out of the prison, what good would it be?"

"Yes Master Moody that is correct, but since you put in the 'white-noise' box in Master Black's room, the wards around his room have been getting weaker. I wouldn't be surprised if another house elf not assigned to Azkaban couldn't also make it into his cell." Simons said.

"You mean if a person knows how to 'slide' like a house elf they may be able to get into Sirius' cell?" Harry was getting excited.

"Yes Master Harry, that is correct, however you would only be able to 'slide' as you call it to the magical signal of another person or

house elf. If you get it wrong you could end up inside a stone wall, or in a room full of Dementors."

"I've got to try! I have to see him tonight! Haven't you kept him away from me long enough?" Harry said this last part looking at the Headmaster.

"Yes Harry we – I – have. If you are not successful, I will personally leave first thing in the morning to get him." Professor Dumbledore said.

"Okay, Simons, You go back and wake Sirius up. Tell him to get dressed and help him get everything packed. I'll be there in just a few minutes." Harry said.

Professor Dumbledore took over from there: "Madame Bones, could you please take your prisoner out of here. I'm sure Sirius' reaction will even more violent then Remus".

Turing to the other heads of house: "Could you please escort the students back to their houses, with the exception of Mr. Potter, he is needed in another meeting in the atrium next to the main hall. Minerva, I believe your presence will also be requested at that second meeting as well."

"Mr. Moody, if you could please take care of Mr. Lupin once Mr. Pettigrew is out of the room. I think he may need someone to calm him down as well."

"I'm sure he will."

With that, everyone went to perform their own tasks. Harry had been concentrating on Simons' magical signature. When the magical signature stopped moving, Harry 'slid' towards it. The only people in the Headmasters office at that time were the Headmaster, Tiberius Ogden, 'Mad-eye' Moody, and a very confused, very mad Remus Lupin.

"I told you, you were handling the boy wrong. How many other boys, or grown wizards for that matter could do what he just did? I'm not just talking about capturing Pettigrew, but how many wizards are trusted enough by the house elves, and goblins that they allow him to learn how to 'slid' like they do?"

"You can't apparate out of Hogwarts Albus. You can't even portkey into Azkaban. But something tells me that we will both be seeing Sirius Black very shortly."

The Headmaster for his part just hung his head in shame.

Azkaban Prison – Sirius Black's cell

Sirius was not laughing when Simons woke him up from his sleep. He didn't believe him that he would be seeing Harry shortly that evening. But when he saw how serious Simons was in getting everything packed and cleaned up, he ask Simons what had happened in the Headmasters office.

"They caught him sir! They caught Mr. Pettigrew tonight in the Headmasters office! He had been hiding in his animagus form in the home of large family of wizards. But they caught him!"

"When I left, Madame Bones was writing out a writ for your release and an arrest warrant for Peter Pettigrew."

"But what does Harry have to do with that? How is he going to get here? It takes hours to come across in the boat, and it only sails during the day-light hours."

"Master Harry is a very strong wizard who has a trick or two up his sleeve. Now, quite stalling and get dressed!"

Sirius was dressed, sitting at his little table sipping some tea deep in thought. What would Harry be like? Would he still want him to be his godfather? He was so deep in thought he didn't notice when another young man entered the cell.

"Sirius?" Harry asked quietly.

Sirius looked up into the haunting green eyes of his godson.

Jumping up from the table, Sirius took Harry into a bone-crushing hug. "Harry!"

Both just stood there for several minutes crying on each other.

"Oh Harry, can you ever forgive me?"

"What's to forgive Sirius? I just experienced a little of what you must have felt ten years ago. If there hadn't been other people in the Headmaster's office when Peter was revealed, I'm pretty sure I would have tried to kill him too. I just wanted to get you back. That's all that kept me or Remus from trying to kill him."

Sirius broke the hug and held Harry out at arms length to get a better look at him.

"You look so much like James, but your eyes are belong to Lily."

"Come on Sirius, let's get out of here." Harry said.

"I'm all for that! Ah, Harry? How are we getting out of here?"

"Just hold on." Harry said. "Simons, make sure you pick everything up, and get that 'white noise' box after we leave."

Harry concentrated on creating enough negative matter to create a portal large enough for both he and Sirius to make it to the Headmasters office.

Headmasters office Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

About ten minutes had passed away since Harry had left the Headmasters office. Madame Bones had returned a quickly looked around the room.

"Where's Lord Potter Headmaster?"

'Mad-eye' Moody answered. "It seems our young Lord Potter has taken it upon himself to fetch Mr. Black."

"What! That's impossible! The quickest we'd be able to get Mr. Black out is tomorrow morning."

"Well, I beg to differ with ya Bones. I'd be willing to put money on it that young Mr. Potter will be appearing right here in this room very shortly."

"How is he to do that Mr. Moody? Everyone knows that you can't apparate in Hogwarts!"

Just then, Harry and Sirius appeared to 'walk' right into the Headmaster's office.

Sirius looked around at the room, the people, and his godson and did what anyone else would do... He fainted.

'Mad-eye' laughed as he levitated Sirius to another couch in the Headmasters office. It seems Remus Lupin occupied the first couch when he saw Harry 'walk' in the room with Sirius and he fainted.

Madame Pomfrey was called to make sure each young man was all right, and then with a wave of her wand, and a strong 'Rennervate' revived first Remus, then Sirius.

Getting up slowly, Sirius said: "I must be losing it Simons. I just had a dream that my godson, Harry, came and took me away from this hell hole. Can you believe that?"

"Yes Uncle Sirius, I can." Harry said.

Sirius shot up in a flash almost falling off his couch. He looked straight at Harry and again looked like he had seen a ghost. Before he could respond however, Remus came into his field of view. "It's all true Sirius. You're a free man. And much of the credit goes to this young man right here." Remus put his arm around Harry's shoulders and gave him a quick squeeze. That was when he noticed how hard Harry was shaking.

Remus got down on his knees and with both hands, turned Harry to face him.

"It's Okay cub, you got him out, everything's going to be okay." With that he pulled Harry in to a tight hug, and felt Harry let go a cry on his shoulder.

"Remus?" Sirius asked.

Remus waited until Harry had himself under control before he stood up and looked at his long-time friend.

"Hello Padfoot, miss me much?" Remus said with a half smile on his face.

Both men went and hugged each other in the middle of the room. For each it was more a test to see if the other were real than anything else, but they were both very happy to see each other again.

After several minutes, Sirius was brought up to speed as to the events that lead to his release. At the end, Professor Dumbledore handed Sirius a rolled up parchment. "This is the writ of your release Sirius. You are, as of this moment, a free man. A copy of this order is being recorded in the Hall of Records, and there is still a slight matter of compensating you for false imprisonment. That should be taken care of in a few weeks."

"I'll be glad to forgo any compensation Headmaster, if you will just give me a few minutes with that rat Pettigrew!"

"I understand your feelings Sirius..." The Headmaster started.

"UNDERSTAND MY 'FEELINGS'? With all due respect Headmaster, until you've spent a few years with dementors you have no way of understanding my feelings!"

"That reminds me Headmaster; WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINKING PUTTING HARRY WITH THE DURSLEYS?"

Remus had to use a considerable amount of force to keep Sirius from causing serious injury to the Headmaster.

"That's all right Uncle Sirius, I've taken care of that, which brings me to my next issue... We need to be moving to meet our other guest." Harry stated.

Sirius was surprised that someone as young as Harry would be so much in control of things.

"Of course you are correct Harry..."

"That's Mr. Potter, or Lord Potter if you please Headmaster. You haven't earned the right to call me by my given name yet." Harry's voice was cold and final.

For his part, the Headmaster bowed his head meekly and again apologized to Harry.

Sirius looked around the headmasters office for a few moments and then said: "Ya know, as many times as James and I have been in this office, I don't think I've ever look so... nice. What did you do headmaster? Get your room re-furnished?"

"Alas no, the new office and other parts of Hogwarts are courtesy of Lord Ravenclaw. By the way, Minerva, were you able to determine who Lord Ravenclaw was, or what house he was sorted into?"

"I'm sorry headmaster, no. I would have thought the wards around Hogwarts would have reveled him to you."

"No, I'm afraid they did not, unlike forty some years ago. All I know is that the acknowledged heir of Ravenclaw is attending school this year." The headmaster stated.

"Why would you want to know who the heir of Ravenclaw is headmaster?" Harry asked.

The headmaster had to stop and form his answer carefully.

"There has not been a head of the house of Ravenclaw for almost nine hundred years. Apparently, only the heir can enter into one of the founders vault at Gringotts. It would be quite fascinating to see what treasures one could find there. There are also certain artifacts that could be there should be returned here to Hogwarts for well keep and to display the solidarity of the founder."

"Are you sure you want them for the School headmaster?" Harry asked.

"Mr. Potter!" Professor McGonagall stated.

"I'm sorry Professor, I'm of the opinion that the artifact of the founders should be with their families. Don't you agree Madame Bones." Harry asked.

Madame Bones looked up sharply to Harry from her thoughts.

"Oh? What was that Lord Potter? The artifacts of the founders? Oh yes, I think it would be wonderful if the artifacts were returned to the families. You know, my gran use to tell a story the challis of Hufflepuff being a family heirloom in our family at one time. But I haven't seen it. It's like it was just swallowed up in the earth and disappeared."

"Oh, I'm sure it will show up sooner or later," Harry said, looking at Professor Dumbledore, "Don't you Professor?"

"Ah, ... yes, I'm sure it will Amelia, now please, we must be moving on. We don't want to keep our other guest waiting."

Leaving the Headmasters office, Madame Bones, Lord Ogden, 'Mad-eye' Moody, Professor McGonagall, and the Headmaster lead Harry and Sirius, along with Remus, who were all holding back a little, talking, down the hallway to a small meeting room off the Great Hall.

As they walked down the hallway, Sirius and the others kept looking all around him and the changes that had made as a gift from the heir of Ravenclaw.

Everyone was so preoccupied by the changes that no one noticed a lone dark figure that rose from one of the alcoves along the way.

"REDUCTO!" the attacker yelled. The curse was heading directly for Sirius.

Sensing an incoming spell, Harry stepped to the side of the group facing the direction the spell was coming from. Before anyone could respond, Harry had his custom Alere Roboris (Feed Core Shield) activated, around everyone in the group. Even before the attackers spell had hit the shield, Harry fired his own 'Reducto' curse and was pleased when he heard it hit its mark. "ACCIO ATTACKER" Harry yelled.

Everyone was surprised when they saw a full-grown size wizard come flying across the hall. Just before he got to the group, a wall appeared in front of the group, and the wizard hit it full force, with a sickening crunch.

The wall disappeared; everyone looked down in semi-shock to see the bloody face of the potions teacher, Professor Snape.

Harry looked down at a barely conscious Snape and said with a straight face: "Professor Snape, didn't you listen to the announcements at the welcoming feast? No magic in the hallway. You might get hurt."

Everyone was in varying states of shock, but Sirius was the first to come out of his stupor and started laughing hard.

"Oh, if that doesn't bring back good memory!" He roared. "Snivellus trying to get the drop on one of the Marauders, and ending up on the short end of the stick!"

"Mr. Black, please, Professor Snape requires immediate medical attention!" Professor Dumbledore said.

"Yes Professor." Harry said, "But since he initiated the attack, aren't we allowed to defend ourselves?"

"Of course Mr. Potter. But I think that may have been a bit 'extreme'. Don't you?"

"On the contrary Headmaster. The spell was meant to cause serious (you know what I mean, Sirius) injury. I will protect my 'family' sir. And I will make no excuse to that bully for my actions."

"Madame Bones, if this incident had occurred off school grounds, what would have happened?" Harry asked.

"As initiator of the attack, Mr. Snape would have been taken into custody, and, after being healed, charged with assault."

"Headmaster, I rest my case. If he tries to attack my friends, or me I will defend them and me. And Merlin help him if he tries it off campus."

The group was delayed as the Headmaster took Professor Snape to Madame Pomfrey to be healed.

When the group got to the small room off the Main Hall, they found Ragnok, Goldridge, and Stonehand from Gringotts. Madame Bones,

'Mad-eye' Moody and Tiberius Ogden joined them in the front of the room.

Professors McGonagall and Remus joined Professor Flitwick who was waiting with the Goblins.

Professor Dumbledore stood far off to the right of the room.

Harry and Sirius were left in the center of the room facing the Board of Inquiry.

Goldridge started the meeting. "Thank you for bringing the participants to the Board of Inquiry. You are dismissed Professor Dumbledore."

"But, I thought..." the Headmaster started.

"Your services are no longer required in this matter Headmaster." Goldridge said again.

They all waited until the Headmaster had left the room, and then cast several spells to insure there was no more listening spells remaining.

Looking at Sirius, Goldridge began again. "Congratulations Lord Black, it is good to see you out of Azkaban."

"This Board of Inquire has been called by the current Head of the Potter House, who also happens to be the Heir Presumptive of the ancient and noble house of Black. Is it your wish that Lord Potter continues in that function?"

It took Sirius a while to realize what was going on, but when he did, he looked down at Harry, and then back at the Board. "Yes Goldridge."

"Professor McGonagall, since Lord Black has been proven innocent, and is capable of resuming the duties of Guardian, we release you with our thanks."

"The pleasure was mine gentlemen, my Lady."

"Professor Flitwick, as Executor of the Potter Will, I believe you have something to say to Lord Black?"

"Yes I do Goldridge, thank you."

"Lord Black, let me read what part of what James and Lily wrote in their Will:"

"We know you don't need it Sirius, but we bequeath one million galleons to you and the Southern French manor."

"Do you accept this bequeath Lord Black?"

Sirius had his head down low so that people could not see the unshed tears in his eyes.

"They were always too good to me. Yes I will accept the bequeath."

"Uncle Sirius, the manor in France is a little worse for wear right now. Can I have some of my house elves go over and clean it up a bit?" Harry asked innocently.

"Sure Harry, if it's not too much trouble."

"Oh, no trouble at all. Harry grinned."

Sirius looked at him for a minute and said, "Why do I get the feeling that something big is going to happen?"

"Because despite being away for several years, you're still sharp as an old hound dog." Said Remus.

"That concludes the business of this Board of Inquire. Again, welcome back Lord Black, I believe Stonehand has a summary of the activities of your accounts, and your Gringotts keys. We look forward to serving you again in the near future."

With that, the members of the Board of Inquiry got up and left the room.

Sirius looked down at the stack of parchment he had just received. Deciding to ignore it for a moment, he looked up at the group of people still in the room.

"Thank you." He started. "Thank you all for helping Harry and believing in me. I... I just don't know what to say right now."

"That's okay Padfoot, you'll have the rest of your life to figure it out." Remus said.

"Harry, it's after one in the morning, and you still have classes to attend." Professor McGonagall said.

"Ah, Aunt Min, can't I spend more time with Uncle Sirius? I mean he just got here! I have so many questions to ask him!"

"I'm sorry Harry, but I'm sure you'll figure some way to visit with him over the course of the year." She said with a little twinkle in her eye. "But I don't want to hear a word about it, so you better be careful! I'll give you five more minutes. I'll be right outside the door."

"Thanks Aunt Min." Harry said as he gave her a little hug.

"Minerva?" Sirius started. "Thank you for watching after Harry in my absence. It looks like you and Remus have done a great job. Oh, and before I forget, remind me to talk to you about Mad-eye's patronum sometime, okay?"

Professor McGonagall gave Sirius a strange look, but just shook her head. "Thank you Sirius. I think. Well, I guess I'll see you over the weekend. You can tell me then."

Professor Flitwick left with Professor McGonagall.

"Well, it's just us now. We know where Harry will be staying. It sounded like James and Lily gave you their parent's old place Remus. Did you ever get it fixed up? I guess that just leaves me. I really don't want to go back to Number 12, but..."

"Don't worry Padfoot. If you had been read the whole Will, you would know that I have a little 'Dog run' you can use until Harry and Ty get your place fixed up." Remus said.

"Ty? Who's Ty?" Sirius asked.

"You'll find out. Now come on, we have to let Harry get his beauty sleep so he can be all rested and ready for the girls, I mean, for school."

"Okay, just give me a minute." Sirius said.

Sirius faced Harry and looked at him again for several moments. "You look so much like James, but your eyes and your spirit are Lily's." Hugging Harry again, Sirius said, "Thank you Harry, thank you. I don't know how you did it. I don't CARE how you did it. All I know is that you did do it. You got me out of Azkaban. Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"I'm going to miss being with you, but I'm sure Remus and I have a few things to catch up on. I'll see you as soon as I can."

"I know Uncle Sirius. I'm just glad to have you out of that terrible place."

After a few more hugs, Harry left to join Professor McGonagall and had her show him the way to the Gryffindor common room. "Now hurry straight to bed Harry. Morning will be here before you know it."

"I know Professor McGonagall, thank you and goodnight."

Harry walked into the Common Room and soon found his way to the first year's dorm. Something told him this was going to be a very good year – If he only knew.

End of Chapter 20

Next Chapter – The First Day of School

Please enjoy. If not, oh well, there are plenty of stories to choose from.

Rick

Chapter 21 – The First Day of School

Repost:

From Chapter 20 –

Harry walked into the Common Room and soon found his way to the first year's dorm. Something told him this was going to be a very good year – If he only knew.

First Years Boy's Dorm – Gryffindor House.

Harry soon found himself in the boy's dorm for all the first year that had been sorted into Gryffindor.

It was so late at night that Harry just decided to try to go straight to bed, and talk to his roommates tomorrow, but there was still a lot he had on his mind that he had to think about. Taking his Grandfather's trunk out of his pocket, he placed it on his bed and expanded it to its original size. Opening the first chamber, he took out a set of pajamas, and quietly changed. After a quick trip to the attached bathroom.

Harry thought it would be wise to use the second trunk his mother had given him as his 'school' trunk. It could sit at the foot of his bed like the other boys' trunks. This way the boy's in the dorm wouldn't wonder about his family trunk, and he could keep it out of sight. So, Harry removed the second trunk from the family trunk and sat it at the foot of his bed, shrunk the family trunk back down and put it away for safe keeping. He wanted to keep this trunk with him at all times if he could.

After pulling the curtains around the front side of his bed, but letting the moon light fall through the window on the back side of his bed, Harry laid back and sorted the events of the past day. And what a day it had been!

- Completing his fourth animagus form
- The trip to Kings Cross Station and Platform nine and three quarters
- Meeting Hermione, Ron, Susan and Neville
- Discovering Peter Pettigrew in the form of 'Scabbers'
- Removing the Magical Binds from Neville, Susan and Ron

- Training in Chamber eight
- His first experience with Hogwarts
- The sorting ceremony and his encounter with the sorting hat
- His meeting with Professor Dumbledore and the other adults to show them Peter
- Getting his Godfather back

All these memories and many others had to be sorted and filed in their proper location before Harry could go to sleep.

The sorting went amazingly quickly, as Harry wanted to take some extra time to think on his Godfather, Sirius Black.

There was one last thing he wanted to do before going to bed. That was to check with Ty to find out how things went with the castle renovation.

"Ty?" Harry whispered, so as to not wake up his roommates.

In an instant the small, excited house elf stood before Harry in his Ravenclaw uniform.

Bowing to Harry, Ty said, "What does my lord wish?"

"Thanks for coming here so late Ty, and remember, it's just Harry. I wanted to thank you and your crew for the great job you did with fixing up Hogwarts. Everything looks great! Did you experience any problems while you were fixing the place up?" Harry asked.

"Thank you mas... Harry. For the most part everything did go quite well. As you predicted, Headmaster Dumbledore did try to make us stop, but for the most part, things went as well as could be expected."

"The other house elves here at Hogwarts were very happy to help us with the cleaning and reorganizing. They were able to show us some of the less used rooms in the castle, some of these you may find most interesting."

"Like what?" asked Harry.

"It would appear that each of the founders has a secret room or chamber. While most of the chambers are only have books, scrolls,

or weapons left in them, Master Slytherin's chamber also has a rather large snake in it. I believe the other house elves called it a Basilisk. They said that the snake currently sleeps but that the last time it was awoken was some forty or more years ago and that it was most terrifying."

"Why did the Basilisk wake up? Did the other house elves say"?

"They say that when the last heir of a founder, Lord Slytherin was here, he woke the snake up. He was a young half-blood boy by the name of Tom Riddle. The house elves seem to think that he lived in a place called an 'orphanage' when he wasn't at Hogwarts, and that even though he was a top student, and head-boy, he was very cruel when he thought no one was watching. They say he even had the animal kill a young girl in one of the bathrooms before he sealed his secret chamber again putting the snake back to sleep."

"Boy! If these walls could talk! I bet there are a lot you could learn, right Ty?"

"Oh but these walls can talk mas... Harry, after a fashion."

"What do you mean Ty?"

"Well, there are many old and ancient wards that have been on the castle for a thousand years sir. Part of the functions of these wards is to 'report back' to the founder or headmaster the status of the castle in different areas and when different events happen. Over time, it would seem that the castle has become more or less aware of it's self and has developed a personality."

"The personality is a combination of every witch and wizard that has ever cast a spell or ward here in the school. But lucky for you, two of the most predominate influences on her personality were Lady Ravenclaw and Lord Gryffindor."

"Ty, are you telling me that Hogwarts has a... a soul?"

"No Master Harry, not a soul like you or I, more of an... essences that reflects the combined knowledge, feelings, and experience of all the different people that have ever been here. You might say that each student and teacher leaves a bit of themselves behind when they leave Hogwarts."

"Wow! That's quite a lot to think about! I wonder if there is any way to 'talk' with Hogwarts?" Harry said mostly to himself.

"I don't know sir, the other house elves say that sometimes they can tell that the castle is helping them do their job, or helping some of the students get from class to class by keeping the stairs from moving on them. One of the older elves said that Hogwarts was 'feeling' much happier after we arrived here to start cleaning things up. I also could tell the moment you crossed the wards while you were on the lake. All of the lights and lamps seemed to burn a little brighter, the armor in the hallway seemed to stand a little straighter, and the characters in the paintings looked a bit more alert all after you passed through the wards."

"I wonder what happened when Tom Riddle passed through those wards?" Again, Harry asked mainly to himself.

Responding Ty said, "According to the elder house elves, when Master Riddle came here the castle seemed more dark and foreboding."

"Well thank you for your report. Is there anything else you think I need to know about?" Harry asked his excitable elf.

"There was one other room that seemed most interesting to me Master Harry. The other elves called it 'The Come and Go Room'. It would seem that sometimes it is there, and other times it is not. It seems that the entrance to the room is across the corridor from a tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy on the seventh floor of the castle. According to the elder house elves, you have to have an idea of what it is you need from the room. Then walk back and forth in front of the wall three times. If you have done everything correctly, a door will appear, and you will find the room you need inside."

Harry was getting more and more excited as Ty was telling about the room. He had been concerned that he would not be able to meet with Neville and Susan since they had been sorted into a different house. But now, they would be able to meet in either the early mornings or evenings in the Come and Go Room and meet to train, talk or study.

Harry thanked Ty again, and told him that the sorting hat also wanted to thank him for the fine job he had done in fixing him. Quickly Harry sorted all this new information away before going to sleep.

Harry went to sleep that night with a very big smile on his face.

As Harry slept that night, he went to talk to 'Ma' about some of the things Peter had said and the other things he had learned from Ty.

'Ma', are you there?' He asked.

'Yes Harry, over here.'

Harry found his 'Ma' in a field with a small cottage in it at the edge of a small village.

'Is this Godric's Hollow?' He asked.

'Yes. I was just thinking of all the wonderful times I had there with your father. The plans we had of raising our family out of the main view of the world safe from Voldemort and his minion. Things didn't workout quite the way I had envisioned them.'

'Ma', about what Peter said... It wasn't your fault. I'm sure you didn't led him on to think that there could be something between the two of you...did you?'

'No Harry, I didn't! I was just trying to be nice to everyone... including Severus.'

'You're kidding right?' Harry gasped.

'No Harry, I'm not kidding. For almost seven years I was his study partner in potions and charms. We grew very close during that time. He can be a 'likable' person when he wants to be but that seemed to change in our seventh year when I started dating James.'

'James and Severus have always had hard feelings towards each other. One was in Gryffindor, the other in Slytherin; your father a pure-blood, while Severus was a half-blood – please don't let that become general knowledge – being a half-blood in Slytherin was bad enough. If some of the pure-blood families found out that a half-

blood was head of Slytherin House, the Headmaster would have howlers everyday until he was removed from his position, and from the school!

'That doesn't sound too bad after what he said about me and dad, and what he tried to do to Uncle Sirius.'

'Harry James Potter! You will behave yourself and try to get along with Professor Snape! He may not be the nicest person around, but he has had a very hard life growing up.'

'I know you are planning on pranking him with those Weasley twins, but like you told that nice Granger girl, get to know him first. See if you can resolve your differences peacefully – not like this evening when you 'Accio'd him into a brick wall! If he doesn't straighten up... I'm sure I can help you find a charm to turn all of his underwear red and gold, and all of his robes bright pink. I think there's even one spell in there to turning his hair into a 'dirty' blond, but for now – just try to get to know him a little bit better. I'm hoping he can be a big enough person to get over childish feuds that should have died out years ago.'

Harry and his 'Ma' talked for a while longer about her time at Hogwarts and her relationship with some of the different staff members still at the school.

'Ma', did you or dad know about the Come and Go Room? Or about the essence of Hogwarts?' Harry asked.

'No son, I didn't, and I don't think your father did either. If he had, the Come and Go Room would have been the ideal place to plan and stage all of the pranks he and the rest of the Marauders pulled off.'

'Now, as to the essence of Hogwarts, again, I didn't know about that either, but, now that I think about it, it just makes sense. I mean, look at me. I'm the essences of your mother. I am a result of your mother's magic. But I also 'feel'. I feel love, anger, happiness, sadness. All the emotions she felt in life, I feel now. All of the experiences she remembers, I remember – and even those experiences she has pressed back into the dark recess of her mind. I feel that given any situation, I would do the same thing she would have done, so why not Hogwarts? Every time you perform a spell, a part of you is included in that spell, your power and your intent. I'm

sure over the millennium of time Hogwarts has been around, the amount of magic that has been performed here must be tremendous! Depending on how the founders set up the original wards around the school, I can see where it would be possible to Hogwarts to develop its own 'essences' over time.' 'Ma' said thoughtfully.

'But is there a way for me to 'talk' with Hogwarts like I do you or Durendal, or even Sir Toppum in the sorting hat?' Harry asked.

'I don't know Harry,' 'Ma' said, 'But I don't think it would hurt to try.'

'How do you think I would be able to talk to her 'Ma'?'

'Well, most of the time you have either had the 'essence' placed in you, or you have been in possession of an artifact that was imbued with the essences such as the sword, or the sorting hat. Now, I don't think there is any way you could 'put on' Hogwarts. It's just too big. But what's from stopping you from doing what you did at Ollivander's? Send your magic out and see if you can feel or sense Hogwarts presences?'

Harry thought about this for a few moments. It would be fascinating to be able to 'talk' to the castle, and in a way, he realized that he already had. When they were coming across the lake in the boats, he had felt the wards around the ancient castle recognize him as a heir of the founder, but had 'asked' the ward not to let the Headmaster know who he was. He couldn't be sure, but it seemed as if he received a response back letting him know his wishes would be respected. Had that been Hogwarts' 'talking' to him? He wanted to believe it was, but did he really want to try and 'talk' with her again right now?

He came to the conclusion that he had enough on his mind right now with everything that had happened today, he was just overwhelmed.

'I think I wait for this 'Ma'. I think it's going to take me a few days to understand everything that has happened to me tonight, if you know what I mean. Plus I need to get some sleep sometime tonight.'

'Okay dear, I understand. You have had quite a busy day today. Why don't you go to 'Potter in the Mind' to get some rest now, and

we will see how you do with your classes tomorrow okay? Good night dear.'

After Harry left 'Ma', he went to talk to Durendal who reminded him that while having fun was a part of life and living, there was a right time, and a right place to blow off a little steam. Being a Paladin in training Harry had to remember to set the proper example of chivalry and manners – a real mood killer if you're trying to plan a prank or two.

Durendal also let Harry that yes, he could 'sense' the essences of Hogwarts. That it was mostly kind and benevolent, and was anxious to 'talk' to someone besides the Headmaster. But Durendal had something else to tell Harry – something was not right at Hogwarts.

'There is a very evil presences here in the castle, It's possible more then one, from both the staff and the students. I know you felt one of those presences at the welcoming feast. I would suggest you keep me very close by so that you may act quickly if the need arise young master.'

'Thank you Durendal, I will.'

'Well, sleep well now young master.' And that is just what Harry did.

Before he knew it, it was time to get up. The sun was shining through his window, and since he had failed to close his curtains on the window side of his four-poster bed, the light was hitting him right in the face.

Harry decided to get up to get a good start on a new day. After showering and taking care of other business, he came out to meet his dorm-mates.

Ron he already knew from the time he'd spent on the train with them and in his trunk. The other two were Dean Thomas and Seamus Finnigan. They were likable enough mates, but Harry didn't know how to react around them.

Dean and Seamus where the poster children of what a fun-loving eleven year-old boy should be. They were rowdy, messy, loud, playful, didn't take many things seriously.

It seemed Seamus was predisposed to some of the 'harder' drinks in the wizarding world, and both boys were well into puberty already, since they were taking special notice how some of the members of the opposite sex seemed to walk and fill out their robes. Of course, all girls still had 'cooties', but they were starting to get curious about them.

Harry decided to mostly ignore this two, but not cut them off completely. Who knows, he may start to notice girls as other than study companions too some time soon.

Harry and Ron met Hermione in the common room and proceeded to go to breakfast. Ron was having a hard time staying with the group. He hadn't eaten in nearly eleven hours, and was sure he would just waste away to nothing if he didn't eat soon.

"Come on guys! We can talk when we get there! We don't want all the food to be eaten and have to wait until lunch to get fed now do we?" Ron was pleading with the group. The twins had told him that it was first-come, first-serve as to the meals, and that once the food was gone – it was gone. Nothing left for stragglers.

"But Ron, that doesn't make sense now, does it." Hermione replied. "Just look at the feast last night – I don't think I've ever seen more food in one place at one time in my life! And I know that when you and Harry put food on your plates, the serving dish didn't look any emptier then before you had it. So what makes you think they'll limit your food intake for breakfast?"

"That's just it! They probable spent the whole year's food budget on that feast last night, and we'll be forced to eat bread and water for the rest of the year!" Ron was getting more hysterical each passing moment.

"Ah, Ron, where did you get this information from?" Harry asked, "From the twin's perhaps? The same twins that said you would have to wrestle a troll to see if you could get into Hogwarts in the first place?"

"Ya, so?" Ron replied not seeing what the connection between the two pieces of information.

"Ah, Ron, what I think Harry is trying to say is that if the twins didn't tell you the truth about how you were to be sorted into a house, there is a good possibility that they are also pulling your leg regarding some other things about Hogwarts – like meals?" Harry was trying to help his friend see the truth as gentle as he could. He didn't want Ron to lose all faith in the twins, but he also wanted Ron to start thinking for himself, and not always rely on someone else to tell you what to think.

"No – they wouldn't do that now. They know just how much I love eating. They wouldn't tease me about something as serious as food – would they?"

Before anyone could answer, Fred and George Weasley seemed to come out of nowhere to be in front of the group of first years.

"Oy, that was a great breakfast, wasn't it George." Fred started.

"Indeed it was – a meal for the ages. Too bad these firsties will just have to settle for bread and water now isn't it Fred?" George replied. With that they continued past the group back to the Gryffindor common room.

At this Ron panicked, screamed, and ran the rest of the way to the Great Hall at top speed.

The rest of the group continued walking, and were at the Great Hall in no time flat.

Susan Bones and Neville Longbottom were just getting to the Great Hall as the rest of the group approached the doors.

"What's wrong with Ron?" Susan asked, "I could hear him running for the Great Hall as soon as I came out of the Hufflepuff common room."

"Oh, his brothers told him that they only put out a small amount of food for breakfast in the morning, and if you don't make it here early enough, you have to eat bread and water until lunch." Hermione explained.

Everyone laughed and entered the Great Hall together.

After bidding Susan and Neville goodbye, the rest of the group headed over to the Gryffindor table. There they found Ron piling as much food as he could on his plate at one time.

"Looks like we made it in time after all didn't we?" He said to the others not even looking up from his plate.

"Really Ron, I would think that you could tell that your brothers are just teasing you." Hermione said.

"Well, better safe than sorry isn't it" Ron replied.

Giving up arguing with him, the rest of the group settled in at the table for their first breakfast at Hogwarts.

"Harry? What happened in the Headmaster's chamber last night after we left?" Hermione asked.

"Oh, I think you'll all find out as soon as the Daily Prophet arrives." Harry said.

As if on queue, the sound of hundreds of pairs of wings could be heard entering the Great Hall. The morning Post was here, and with it, a special edition of the 'Daily Prophet', the most widely read paper in the wizarding world.

It only took a few moments before screams and yells could be heard around the Hall. When Harry's friends got their copy they knew why:

Sirius Black cleared of all charges!

Peter Pettigrew found alive after living ten years as a Rat!

The article went on to say that Peter had been found out while in the office of the Headmaster, Albus Dumbledore. Harry was grateful that it didn't mention whom the rat belonged to or the fact that several first-year students had been present at the time.

It did say that officers from the Magical Law Enforcement Department, and the Wizengamot, along with other witnesses were 'summoned to positively identify' Peter who was arrested on the spot. A writ of release was issued for Sirius stating that he was free to go.

All of his privileges as a wizard were being restored, and that he had been re-instated as the Head of the House of Black.

The article ended by stating that Sirius was staying at 'A family friends', while Peter was being held in a Ministry holding cell awaiting trial.

Professor Dumbledore stood up at the head table and called the Hall to order.

"I am sure you have all read by now that Sirius Black has been cleared of all charges and has been released. This means that he was not the secret keeper for James and Lily Potter; he did not reveal their location to Voldemort (most of the Hall gasps at the sound of the name); He did not kill Peter Pettigrew – seeing how he was found completely alive; and he did not kill all those muggles. A small, petty man who did not know the meaning of words like 'honor' and 'friendship' did all this, and framed an innocent man in the process.

"I hope we can gain experience from this incident, and be more careful how we judge our friends – and our enemies. Thank you." With that Professor Dumbledore sat back down and breakfast continued.

"That was strange." Ron said.

Harry looked over at Ron and watched him for a minute. "Ron?" Harry said.

Ron looked up with a half a sausage link hanging out of his mouth. "Wat?" He tried to say.

"I'm sorry about you losing your pet last night. If you'd like I'll replace it with something else." Harry offered.

Ron thought for a few minutes while he finished chewing the breakfast meat. "Thanks, but not right now. I'm still mad at that little 'rat' of a man used my family to hide for the last ten years. Hey, the paper didn't tell who he was staying with did it? Well, I guess that's a good deal since I'm sure someone like little 'lord' Malfoy would love nothing better then to rub something like that in my face. I guess I should write mum and dad tonight to tell them about it. Maybe they

can get me something new." Ron did look a little hurt about losing his 'pet'. But the last thing he needed right now was pity from Harry Potter.

"Look Ron, this isn't like pity or anything else like that." Harry replied back, "I didn't tell you what I wanted with you and Scabbers when we went up to the Headmasters office last night, and as a result, something of yours was taken. The least I can do is try to replace it... after I apologize for my stupid trick in the first place."

"Na, that's alright Harry. It wasn't really a pet new anyway was it? But how did you know it was an animagus?" Ron asked.

Harry had to think quickly, so, to buy some time, he took a bite out of his English muffin with orange marmalade. "Well," He started, "I was thinking of the spell you were trying to cast on the rat. It's true it wasn't a very good spell, but it should have done something – if the thing you were casting it on was a real rat."

"I remember reading in some of my dad's journals how he and two of his friends became animagus while they were here at Hogwarts. One of the forms of one of his friends – Peter – was a rat. Now one thing that you had told us is that you got this rat from your older brother when he was made a prefect and your parents bought him an owl. I didn't know rat lived long enough to still be alive to be able to be passed down from one brother to the next. So I took a chance. I'm just glad it worked out and I have my Godfather back."

"If you change your mind about the new pet, or anything else just let me know. I will be forever in your debt."

After a few moments of odd silence, things got back to normal around the table.

Harry and the rest of the group finishing their breakfasts when Professor McGonagall delivered their class schedules interrupted them again.

"Well what's first?" Asked Ron.

"Looks like potions with Snape." Harry said.

"That's Professor Snape, Harry." Hermione emphasized.

The students took a few moments to look at the different professors. That was when they noticed how banged up Professor Snape looked. He had two black eyes, a broken nose, and a sling on his left arm, not to mention he looked like he was in a great deal of pain.

"I wonder what happened to him?" Hermione asked.

"I hear he tried using magic in the hallway last night and ended up 'running' into a brick wall trying to attack Sirius after he was freed last night." Harry said not even looking up.

"Harry! What did you do to him?" Hermione demanded.

"Never mind Hermione. Besides, you heard the Headmaster last night: No spell-work in the hallway. Professor Snape forgot that and ended up getting hurt." Harry said. He then looked up at the head table to see the results of his handy work from last night.

There, sitting on the far left side of the table was Professor Snape. Currently he was talking to another professor who had a large tunic wrapped around his head.

As soon as Harry looked at the professors, they both looked up and looked directly back at him.

'Something is not right here Master Harry. I sense great darkness from both of these men. Both are harboring dark, dangerous secrets. You will not be able to challenge them until they show cause, but be very careful around each of them.' Durendal said.

Harry was going to respond when he felt a 'tug' on his scare and the 'Tom Riddle' portion of his core.

"AH!" Harry said as he felt a sharp pain through his scar. His hand went up to cover it immediately.

'It would seem that one or both of these two serve the Dark Lord, and has some fragment of his soul with them. That is the only way they could be affecting your core this way. Master Harry, you need to strengthen the shield around the 'Riddle' portion of your core! We cannot afford to have it break through the shield!' Durendal warned.

Harry let out a low growl that reverberated throughout the Great Hall as he tried to ignore the pain in his scare.

Closing his eyes he concentrated on reinforcing the shield Durendal had placed on that portion of his shield three years ago. After a few moments, Harry was sure he had cut off any outside influence to the 'Riddle' core, but just to be sure, He doubled the shield again.

As he was coming out of his self-induced trance, he heard his friend's worried voices around him.

"Harry! Harry! Can you hear me? What's wrong?" Ron and Hermione were both trying to get his attention.

Hermione, for her part just had both hands over her mouth, concern showing clearly in her eyes.

The commotion had also brought thing to the attention of the people at the Head table. Professor Dumbledore and Professor McGonagall were by Harry's side in a flash. Professor Snape and the man in the tunic were just a short distance behind them.

"Mr. Potter, are you alright?" Professor McGonagall.

"Yes Professor, I'm much better now." Harry replied.

"Of course! Just wanted to draw a little more attention to yourself before going to class your first day didn't you Potter?" Professor Snape scowled. "At least the Heir of Ravenclaw knows how to keep a low profile. You don't see them demanding the spot-light do you?"

"That's enough Severus." Professor Dumbledore said. "Are you sure you're alright Harry?"

Harry's eyes flashed for a moment as he looked at the Headmaster. "That is Mr. Potter or Lord Potter to you Headmaster! And yes, I'm fine now."

"Of all the audacity! To address the Headmaster in this way! 20 points from..."

"Severus! That will be enough! Lord Potter is completely within his rights to request the manner of salutation I should use when addressing him. Now, let's all just finish our breakfast so we can get to the first class of the day."

As the group broke up, Harry asked one of the upperclassmen who the man in the tunic was.

"That's Professor Quirrell, the Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher."

Harry filed this information away to be used at a later date.

--++--++ (AN – Most from cannon) --++--++

Potions -

With breakfast over, it was now time to begin school.

The potions labs were all located in the lower levels of Hogwarts, meaning the dungeons.

Harry entered the room and soon found that they would be sharing the class with the first years from Slytherin. Harry got out his parchment, ink, and quill, ready to take notes in class.

Professor Snape burst into the room as menacingly as he could, trying to intimidate the new first year students.

It is hard to look intimidating when you left arm is in a sling, limping heavily with the aid of a cane in your right hand. Your eyes are both bloodied, and there is a piece of tape over your nose, showing to everyone that it had been recently broken.

Still he tried, and to add a bit of fear he actually stopped and glared at the student as he went by.

He quickly limped up to the front of the class and continued as if nothing had happened.

"There will be no foolish wand-waving here! You are here to learn the subtle science and exact art of potion making. I don't expect you will really understand the beauty of the softly simmering cauldron

with its shimmering fumes, the delicate power of liquids that creep through human veins, bewitching the mind, ensnaring the senses... I can teach you how to bottle fame, brew glory, even stopper death - if you aren't as big a bunch of dunderheads as I usually have to teach."

"Ah, if it isn't Harry Potter, our very own ...celebrity."

"Tell me Mr. Potter, What would I get if I added powdered root of asphodel to an infusion of wormwood?"

Harry thought for the briefest of moments and said, "a sleeping potion so powerful that it's called the drought of the living death."

Snape had planned on berating him for his fame and lack of knowledge, but the correct answer made him angry. His lips curled into a sneer.

"Fine, let's try again. Potter, where would you look if I told you to find me a bezoar?"

"If you don't mean the one that is in the fourth row of the potions cabinet in the back of the room, then I believe that's a stone taken from the stomach of a goat, and it can save you from most poisons," Harry said simply without emotion, knowing that Snape was clearly trying to bait him for some reason.

Snape's anger increased even more, so he tried a third time to get his revenge on James Potter. "What is the difference, Potter, between Monkshood, and Wolfsbane?"

"They are the same plant. It's also called Aconite," Harry replied, again without showing any emotion. The whole class was astonished, as they too knew Snape was trying to bait the boy-who-lived.

"Two points from Gryffindor for you attitude Mr. Potter! And why aren't the rest of you writing this down!"

Professor Snape hobbles over to the chalkboard in the front of the classroom and taps it once with his cane.

"Now, let's see how many of you can copy these potion instructions down and complete it before the end of class. You will each try your own potion on yourself at the end of the class." With that, Professor Snape went into his office and closed the door.

The potion they were to be working on was a household general cleaning potion.

Harry noticed that the last ingredient for that potion was missing from the list of elements on the chalkboard.

Without the ground beetle eye, you would end up with a very caustic lye solution instead of a gentle soap.

Harry was trying to decide what the correct course of action to take.

Looking around the classroom, he knew that if he just cast a spell to write the ingredient on the board, most of the students would not see the changes, since most had already finished writing the potion down. He also thought that since this was such a common potion in the magical world, all of the students who had been raised with magic would already know it was missing, meaning only the Muggle-born, or Muggle raised witches and wizards were likely to make the mistake with this potion.

There was only one thing he could do.

Getting up from his chair, Harry walked to the head of the class to the chalkboard and picked up a piece of chalk to make the correction.

As soon as he had picked up the chalk, Professor Snape quickly opened his office door and stepped out.

"Just what do you think you are doing Mr. Potter?" he asked coldly.

"I am making a point of clarification for all of the Muggle-born, and Muggle-raised students ... sir. The entry for the four ground beetle eyes, stir four times counter-clockwise – seems to have been left off the board. I was just making a notation to that effect for the class in general." Harry replied.

"Fifteen points from Gryffindor for questioning a teacher!" Snape spat. "I had left that item off intentionally to see who had read their books."

"Even if that were the case...sir... This potion isn't mentioned until the latter half of the third year potion book since it is a caustic lye solution if not brewed correctly. I don't think many people who haven't been raised in wizarding home would have been aware of that fact, and since you stated we would be testing the product on ourselves, I, for one, did not want to see anyone hurt unnecessarily."

"Ten points from Gryffindor and detention with Mr. Finch for attempting to correct a teacher!" Snape snapped sharply. Harry just stood in front of him calmly knowing that he had done the right thing. "And five more points for your cavalier attitude!"

While he had been having this 'discussion' with Professor Snape at the front of the class, most all the students from Gryffindor were adding the missing item to their potion. Even Crabbe and Goyle could be seen crushing the last ingredient and adding it to their potion.

"Well, Mr. Potter, since you seem to know so much about potions, why don't we try yours right now." Professor Snape stated as he moved towards Harry's cauldron. Snape was going to make sure Harry didn't have any more time to work on his potion. "Just dip a couple of your fingers in and... oh, I don't know... Let's see you rub it on your scar to make sure it doesn't just wash off."

Several of the Slytherin students laughed at the suggestion.

As Harry returned to his seat, just prior to putting his hand in the potion, a small film of gray dust appeared over the open cauldron, but didn't fall in.

"I took the precaution of placing a sealing charm over the cauldron before I came up just in case some 'dust' fell into the potion from the ceiling." Harry said as he looked directly into Professor Snape eyes. He could feel Professor Snape try to enter his mind to see how he knew how to perform this charm since this was the first class of the day for these first year students. Charms wouldn't be held until after lunch, so where had this brat learned how to do a fifth year charm, and when did he activate it? Severus didn't remember hearing any

incantation. 'Could he have cast the charm wandlessly and wordlessly? That would be preposterous! Only powerful wizards like Dumbledore, or great wizards like the Dark Lord can do something like that.'

"You never know when some old ingredients like, oh I don't know – powdered newt – might just show up all of a sudden. And of course we all know that powdered newt neutralizes ground beetle eye now don't we?"

"Are you implying something Mr. Potter?" Professor Snape asked coldly.

"Not at all sir, just making conversation." Harry still looked the Professor directly in the eyes.

'What is this shield he has over his mind? I get nothing from him – just a great void. Well that just proves he doesn't have a thought in his brain. It is not possible for him to block me out so completely.'

Dusting the powder off the top of the cauldron, Professor Snape briskly said, "Come now Mr. Potter, you're wasting valuable class time. Let's see if you are as good at brewing this simple potion as you are attracting attention to yourself."

Without any further comment, Harry removed the sealing charm over his cauldron and dipping two fingers into the potion and then rubbed the potion on his scar as directed. After 30 seconds, there was not adverse reaction to the mixture.

"It seems your potion is marginally acceptable. Three out of ten points, now, let's test everyone else's potion."

Professor Snape went around the room testing the rest of the cauldrons. Only making the students stick their hands into the potion and bring it back out to see if there was any irritation.

Hermione received seven out of ten points while Ron received zeros for his potions when they had a slight pink irritation on their skin after 30 seconds.

Everybody from Slytherin received full marks for their potions even though Crabbe and Goyle had large blisters on their hands as soon

as they touched their concoction. Their problem was solved with a silence charm, and an ample covering of orange paste over the affected area from Professor Snape.

None too soon the bell rang, and class was dismissed.

Once in the hallway Ron and Hermione came up to walk with Harry.

"Oy, mate, 30 points in one class and detention with Finch – that's just down-right unlucky." Ron said.

"32 points." Harry corrected him.

"32 points! The upper classes are going to be looking for blood! Your blood Harry! I mean, couldn't you have done something else so as to not get more points taken away?" Ron asked.

"What I did was right and given the same situation, I would do it again. Now come on, we have to make sure Susan and Neville know what to expect from Professor Snape just in case he tries the same thing with them."

"That was very noble of you Harry. I know I wouldn't have gotten the potion correct without your help, but why didn't you complain to Professor Snape about his unfair handling of the situation – I mean, you did nothing to earn any of those demerits, or the detention." Hermione stated.

"What do you think the results would have been if I were to have challenged Professor Snape when he deducted points or assigned the detention?" Harry asked her.

"Well, I don't know – probable just more deductions and more detention, until he could kick you out of the class."

"That's right. I was not guilty of the first offense or the second offense. Those facts are clear and will be recorded and presented to the proper authorities at the proper time."

"First offense? Second offense? What are you talking about Harry?" Ron asked.

"I am giving Professor Snape every opportunity to resolve any 'issues' he has with me in a peaceful manner. By refusing to do so just gives him 'more rope' that I can use later against him. Besides, I want to make sure any prank against him is completely justifiable."

"Harry! You still can't be thinking of pranking a teacher now can you?" Hermione said.

"Now Hermione, I'm not pranking a teacher, I'm pranking a bully who is taking advantage of his position to terrorize and torment the very children he should be helping and teaching."

"Come on now, let's hurry to Transfiguration and see what Professor McGonagall has for us." Harry said.

Gryffindor had Transfiguration with the students from Hufflepuff, meaning that Neville and Susan would also be in the class.

Entering the Transfiguration classroom, everyone noticed that Professor McGonagall was not present, but for Harry, a very familiar gray calico cat was sitting on the teacher's desk watching the new students come in.

Moving to sit in front of the teacher's desk, Hermione asked, "I wonder where Professor McGonagall is? I wouldn't think she would be late for the first class of a new school year."

"That's fine by me," Ron said, "It just means less work for me to do."

Ron didn't think much about it when the cat seemed to hiss at his comment.

"Ah, Ron, I wouldn't say that too loudly if I were you." Harry warned.

The bell rang as the last of the students found their seats, each looking at the cat at the front of the room. As the bell finished ringing, the cat got up and slowly stretched its self then jumped from the table and on to the floor. As it jumped, it quickly transformed into their instructor, Professor McGonagall who came to rest directly in front of Ron looking down at him over her glasses.

Ron's mouth was open for several seconds as he looked up at his Professor. Finally, as he started to come back to reality he swallowed hard and said, "That was bloody brilliant!"

All of the other students (except Harry) slowly also realized what the Deputy Headmistress had done, and started applauding her work.

"Thank you students that will be all." She said with a voice of authority.

"What you have just witnessed is from one of the most advanced branches of Transfiguration. This goes beyond transfiguring something from one species to another; this is where you actually allow the animal in question – in my case a cat – to actually merge with you. Practitioners of this type of transfiguration are referred to as animagus."

"Since it is possible for a wizard to effectively go into hiding from the authorities, any person who wishes to become an animagus, must register with the ministry as soon as they begin their training. If they are successful with their training, they must register the form they take and the unique marking that can be seen while in their animal form. Currently there are only three registered animagus in all of Great Britain, but as we can see from the Daily Prophet this morning, it would appear that not all practitioners have indeed registered. Yes, Miss Brown?"

"Were you in the Head Master's office when that man was found out?" Lavender Brown asked.

"Yes I was Miss Brown, however I am not at liberty to discuss that matter until a full investigation has been completed to determine how Mr. Pettigrew was able to become an unregistered animagus."

Professor McGonagall started her beginning-of-year lecture:

"The art of transfiguration is one of the most powerful and serious areas in all of magic. Over the years, you will learn how to change one inanimate object into another, such as changing a match into a pin and back. As your understanding, power and control increase, you will be able to change larger items into more complicated patterns.

"Then, in the coming years we will learn how to change an inanimate object into one that appears to be an animated or alive, such as changing a rock into a bird, or a frog, a fish or a dog. Technically these items are not alive since they will only last a short while before reverting back to their original form, but you may find that it is important to know how to perform this type of transfiguration from time to time in very critical situations."

"To be successful in this aspect of transfiguration, you must have a complete understanding of the item you are changing the inanimate object into. For example..." Professor McGonagall picked up a small bar of soap to show it to the class. "If I wanted to change this soap into a mouse, for instance, I must understand what a mouse looks like, how a mouse moves, how it thinks, and what it would do in any given situation. In essence I would know how the mouse's mind interacts with its sense of smell, hearing, touch, sight etc. ... Everything. The better I understand the characteristics of the mouse, the more likely I am of being successful in transfiguring it."

Professor McGonagall placed the bar of soap into a clear glass cage and as she moved her wand over it, said, "Demuto Mus" (change mouse).

All the class gasp as they saw a bar of soap replaced by what looked like a real mouse running around the cage, looking for some way out.

"Yes, Mr. Thomas?" Professor McGonagall asked as she saw Dean's hand go up.

"Um, ah, I mean, ah, what would happen if you were to eat that mouse when you were in your cat form Professor?"

The rest of the class let out a strained laugh – as most of them had been thinking the same thing.

"Well, if you are well trained, you would be able to tell that this is not a real mouse, but that's something else completely. However, if I were to eat this mouse in my animagus form, then in about 15 to 30 minutes I would find myself very sick to my stomach as the mouse would have reverted back to its original form. That is, if it were a good transfiguration. If it were a poor transfiguration however, then

as soon as I bit into the object I would be able to taste the soap bar and immediately spit it out."

"Now, moving on. The next level of transfiguration is being able to change one live species into another live species – for example – dog to cat. It is very important that you understand how dangerous this can be. The Ministry of Magic looks very poorly upon people who think it is funny to change a person in to something else. Unless there is a clear reason why this is done, the person doing the transfiguration can be punished up to and including time in Azkaban."

"Associated with transfiguration is the art of conjuring."

"To some persons it may appear as if conjuring is creating something out of nothing. That is not the case at all. Conjuring is the ability to rearrange the elements in the air with magic its self into a more tangible item. For example..." Professor McGonagall holds out her hand and touches it with her wand. Suddenly a saucer, teacup and steaming tea in the cup appeared all at once.

"In most all cases, there are fine traces of dirt, lint, water and other elements in the air all around you at all times. Conjuring is simply taking these small simple elements and expanding and transfiguring them into the items you need at the time. As with other transfiguration, the size, quality and durability of the items conjured depend in large part to the power of the person casting the spell, and the level of understanding that they have of the object they are conjuring. For example, Professor Dumbledore has a conjured tea set in his office that has served him for the past 15 years. You should not think that a conjured item would last forever. The last tea set the Headmaster conjured lasted 17 years 6 months and then simply returned into the ethos."

"The last course of study in this class in year seven, will be that of an animagus. We will review how a person registers with the Ministry to begin studying to become an animagus, and some of the other skills that will aid you if you wish to pursue this course after Hogwarts. Let me just say that the normal Ministry program takes three years to complete, and requires that you are well versed not only in transfiguration, but animal husbandry, charms and arithmancy."

"Now for the next 20 minutes, I want you to all read chapter 1 in your transfiguration book. Then, if there are no questions, we can begin practicing transfiguring match sticks to pins and back."

Everyone took out their book and dutifully read the first chapter. For Harry and Hermione, it meant reading the chapter – again.

Harry even did this just to reinforce some of the basics of transfiguration and conjuring.

After the 20 minutes, Professor McGonagall answered the questions the students had about what they had read, and passed out the matchsticks. After explaining the incantation ("Demuto acus") (change pin) and wand movement, she let the student practice for the remainder of the class.

"Remember to visualize the results as you are speaking the incantation." She reminded them.

Neville was concentrating so hard on the matchstick, that before he could speak the incantation, it caught on fire. Professor McGonagall was over to his spot quicker than anyone thought she could move and quickly doused the flame out.

After several incidents, Neville was given a toothpick instead. Professor McGonagall said, "Maybe you should not try concentrating on the matchstick quite so hard."

Neville blushed as he took the toothpick and said, "Yes Professor."

During the time remaining, only Hermione, Harry, and those students that Harry had removed their magical bind were successful in changing their sticks to pins and back.

Harry made it look like he was using his wand, but in fact was practicing doing the transfiguration wandlessly, and wordlessly with both his right and left hand. Hermione almost caught him one time, but he quickly moved his hand in the way so she couldn't see what he was doing.

As class ending Professor McGonagall asked Harry to stay after so she could talk to him for a few minutes. He agreed and told everyone he would meet them in the Great Hall for lunch soon.

"Okay Harry, but you better hurry, I don't know if there will be anything left if you don't get there quickly." Ron said as he broke away from the pack of friends on a dead run for lunch.

"Well Harry, how have you enjoyed your first day at Hogwarts?" She asked.

"Well, to be completely honest, I have found it somewhat trying and confusing." He replied.

"Oh, how so?" she inquired.

Harry told Professor McGonagall about the incident in Potions with the missing ingredient not included on the board and how Professor Snape had reacted when he went up to write it on board.

"There is a reason that is a third year potion." Harry commented.

He also went on to explain the 32-point deducted from his house and his detention with Mr. Finch. When he finished, Minerva was more than a little upset.

"I'll talk to Albus about the points and the detention Harry. I just don't understand why Severus can't move on with his life instead of living in the past."

"What do you mean Aunt Min?" Harry asked.

Now it was Professor McGonagall's time to blush.

"I have a feeling all of this is over Severus feeling that your father 'took' Lily away from him. I seem to recall that Lily and Severus were quite close for the first six years of their schooling here at Hogwarts. But during their seventh year, after your mother started dating James, well, let's just say things did not go well between the two men."

"That sounds a lot like what Peter said last night in the Headmasters office, but what does that have to do with me?"

"It would appear that Severus is still not over your mother Harry. I feel that is one of the reasons he has been so miserable over all these years – unrequited love, plus you bear an uncanny resemblance to your father, except for your eyes. It would appear Severus still has hard feeling about your father that he has transferred to you. You are the result of the two most painful memories in his life – the loss of his love, Lily, and the torment and ridicule that he received from James – not to mention what you did to him last night."

Harry smiled at the memory of Snape crashing into the conjured wall last night after he had tried to attack Sirius. "If he is going to hate me, he should hate me for being me not as punishment for missing my mother, or the pranks played on him by my father. If he cannot overcome his problem with me then he's welcome to try to 'adjust' my attitude though I wouldn't suggest trying it."

"Harry, what are you planning to do to Severus? I know that look. It's the same look your father and Sirius used to get before someone was pranked around here."

"Who, me? I'm not planning anything ... yet. I assure you Aunt Min, I will do everything in my power to get along with Professor Snape before I take any action. Even then, it won't be against a Hogwarts Professor that is pranked, it will be against a bully who prays on the children in his care."

"Harry..."

"I'm sorry Aunt Min, but I will not allow such a bias, vial person to go unchallenged while he is in a position of trust. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to get down to lunch in the Great Hall before Ron eats it all."

Harry started out of the room, but then stopped and turned around.

"Oh, Professor McGonagall please let the deductions and the detention stand. I don't want Professor Snape thinking I am a spoiled brat who went running to his Head of House as soon as I didn't get my way."

Professor McGonagall let Harry leave knowing that he was correct in Severus' attitude regarding most children, and that since he was still worthy to hold Durendal, he would always do what was right... Not what was easy.

Walking into the Great Hall, Harry soon found his friends at the Gryffindor table busy eating away.

Along the way, he stopped by the Hufflepuff table and leaning close to Neville's ear he said softly, "Great job on that pin Neville, I've never seen a matchstick burn so bright. I think now that the two binds have been taken off your core, you may find that you 'overpower' a lot of thing until you can get the feel of your magic.

I've found a place in the castle where we can all practice in my trunk. If you would like, after class we can go there and practice on refining your control. How does that sound?"

"That would be great Harry, thanks."

"Okay, you tell Susan, and I'll get Ron and Hermione and meet you up on the seventh floor near the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy at 7:00 o'clock tonight." With that, Harry headed off to his own table.

"Hey guys, room for me?"

Looking back up at the group Harry asked, "Well Ron, did you leave me any lunch?"

"Just a little, it seems almost as good as mom's back home, and it just keeps on coming and coming. Maybe they've changed since Fred and George were here last year. By the way, what did McGonagall want?"

"She just wanted to know about the deductions and detention. I asked her not to interfere. If she did, it would just confirm to Professor Snape that I was a spoiled brat who through a tantrum any time I didn't get my way."

"NOT INTERFERE! BLOODY HELL HARRY THAT'S 32 POINTS WE'RE TALKING ABOUT!" Ron yelled.

Everyone in the Hall was now looking at the group of Gryffindor first years. Some of the Gryffindor upper-class persons were looking at them with concern. Surely they didn't mean that one of those little first years had managed to lose over 30 points already could they?

"Do you think you could say that a little louder Ron? I don't think Hagrid heard you out in his hut." Harry said a little coldly. Ron, for his part just blushed as bright as his hair, dipped his head lower, and continued eating twice as fast as before – trying to act as if no one could see him.

"I will not let Professor Snape continue to think that I am a spoiled brat. I will protect my friends and myself from harm, but I will not oppose him in these actions... yet. He will have to opportunity to 'redeem' himself by treating other people fairly, but if he does not take advantage of that opportunity, then your brothers and I will have to see about humbling him a little." Harry had a feral grin on his face that made chills run down everyone's back.

"Harry you can't do that! It's against the rules!" Hermione restated for about the twenty-something time.

"It's also against the rules to attack law abiding citizens like he did Sirius and the rest of us last night; to willful cause the injury of students in your care – think what would have happened if I hadn't included that last line on the potion. You would have been directly affected. Attempt to alter someone's potion with the intent to cause harm; attempting to use Legilimens on someone without their consent; and last but not least, judging the results of the potion with extreme bias based purely on the House a person belongs to. And that was just from this morning. Not to mention everything he said during the opening feast."

"So tell me Hermione, which set of rules are you going to judge us by? Professor Snape is not excluded from the rules just because he is 'an adult' or a teacher. If anything, he should be held to a higher standard. I'm afraid one of the false pretenses you are living under is that all adults look out after the well being of the younger children and those in their care. If that has been your experience growing up, then consider yourself lucky. Not all adults or teachers are trustworthy or deserving of our blind respect. To me trust and respect are earned, not given blindly."

"I am sorry if you feel I am not agreeing with your point of view Hermione, but I was raised in a very different environment. One where the adults commonly abused and belittled me, so I hope you will understand where I am coming from."

Hermione just hung her head and went back to eating lunch, even though after everything Harry said all she did was move the food around her plate with her fork.

As lunch was just about over, Harry got Ron and Hermione together to tell them about the training session he was planning with Neville and Susan at seven o'clock that evening. Both of them were eager to continue their training.

After lunch, all the Gryffindor first years got up and headed to their Double Charms class with Slytherin.

Charms –

Professor Flitwick watched eagerly as the students entered into his Charms class for the first time. He had great expectations for them this year, due in no small part of Harry Potter being in the class.

Professor Flitwick had been visiting Harry for the last three years after he had been introduced to the young man at Gringotts. Most of the time was because he had been charged with being the executor of the Potter will. But also, he was to explain the wizarding world and the complex world of business and finance to him.

With Sirius being freed, and accepting his gift from the Potter will, his duties as executor were now complete, but he felt an obligation to keep in touch with Harry as a mentor in finances and charms, and as a friend for as long as he could.

Filius had taken time to visit Harry while he was at 'Lupin Manor'. He was aware that Harry was training as a Paladin, and was using magic in 'flexitime' that the Ministry could not detect, but he also understood why Harry was training so hard.

He knew Harry had complete mastery of any charm, hex, jinks, curse, or their counters that could or would be taught at Hogwarts, but that he would never use any charm just to 'show off' or draw attention to himself.

As the bell rang, Professor Flitwick took his place on the stack of books sitting on top of his chair so he could address the class:

"Welcome students to your first day in Charms! You may find by the end of your stay here at Hogwarts that the class name is a bit deceiving, for while you will be learning charms, you will also be learning hexes, jinks, curses, and their counter spells. There will be many thing that you learn here that you will be able to use in your Defense Against the Dark Arts class, as well as in dueling situations."

"Now, the first thing I want everyone to do is to take out their wands for general inspection."

"Taking care of your wand is a very important matter."

Dean and Seamus both ducked their heads and let out a small laugh.

"A wand that is kept clean and polished, free from dings and nicks performs better then one that is neglected."

"Now, each of you will come up here row by row and hand me your wand for inspection. When I give it back to you, I want you to give it a little 'flick' to see how compatible the wand is with you, just like most of you did when you picked up your wand at Ollivander's."

Again, Dean and Seamus snickered into their hands at the possible obscure meaning of the diminutive instructor.

"Lets start with the first row of Slytherin and go around the room from there."

The remainder of the first half of the class was taken up with Professor Flitwick inspecting everybody's wand and giving pointers as to how to take better care of them.

He found that many of the Slytherin, as well as Ron, were using wands that had been passed down in their family. He explained that while any wand would work, in most cases, the effectiveness of spell would be diminished if the caster did not have their own wand.

Everyone was quite surprised when Ron took his wand back from Professor Flitwick and gave it a 'flick' just to shoot off some sparks. The results were large enough to where Professor Flitwick almost fell off his stack of books. If not for Harry's quick reaction in steadying the slight Professor, he would have fallen to the ground.

For the second half of the class, Professor Flitwick showed the students how to correctly hold their wand:

"Place the wand in your dominant hand with the base of the wand even with the edge of your hand, and laying perpendicular to our heart line. Next, fold your thumb over the wand, and wrap your fingers around your thumb, and the wand handle. This is referred to as an 'inside' grip, since the thumb is on the inside of the hand. If done properly, it will help prevent the loss of your wand from a magical attack as the grip will actually become tighter on the wand as it is trying to come out of the hand – let me demonstrate."

Professor Flitwick then cast a very weak 'Expelliarmus' spell against each member in the class. More times than not, the wand would slip out of the students hand and fly to the Professor's feet. If that were the case, then the Professor would banish the wand back to the student, and move on to the next. After several round, most of the students had the general concept, and could now keep their wands as the spell was cast on them.

After class, Harry, Ron and Hermione headed back to the common room to finish up the homework they had received from their classes today, and to review their text books for the subjects they would have tomorrow.

Harry was able to get them alone in a corner and asked if they wanted to meet with Neville and Susan at seven o'clock for some more training in his trunk.

Hermione immediately said 'yes', but Ron wasn't so sure.

"I was hoping to get up a game of wizard's chess against someone in the house. I mean, no one will play with me back at home."

"Oh but Ron, just think how much better prepared we will be for our classes tomorrow and for the rest of the week!" Hermione said enthusiastically.

"That's just it Hermione, I mean, what is this – oh ya, the first day of class! I don't think our teachers are going to be expecting too much out of a bunch of first year students on the first day of class."

Hermione was about to say something else when Harry stopped her.

"It's his decision Hermione, and I've found that if you have to 'nag' someone into studying, it is counter-productive. Come on, we need to be getting up to the seventh floor to meet the others."

Hermione looked like she still wanted to argue with Ron to make him come with them, or at least to feel guilty, but instead, she just nodded her head and started to move towards the common room portal.

"I do hope you'll change your mind Ron. One day you may find that there are things more important in life than chess." and with that he was out the door to catch up with Hermione.

Arriving on the seventh floor, Harry and Hermione found Neville and Susan already there looking at the tapestry.

"I mean, who in their right mind thinks they can teach a bunch of trolls how to dance?" Susan was saying as the others approached them.

"I don't know." said Neville, "I just hope I never meet a troll. Oh, hey Harry, Hermione, where's Ron?"

"He thought Wizard's chess was more important than learning." Hermione said coldly.

Everyone was quiet for a few moments not wanting to get caught in Hermione's cross-fire.

When Neville thought it was safe to talk again, he asked Harry where their training room was.

"You'll see in just a minute." was his response.

The other first year students looked at Harry as if he had lost his mind for a few moments as he seemed to be thinking about about

something as he paced back and forth by the wall on the other side of the tapestry.

On Harry's third pass, the three other students all gasped when there, on the wall, appeared a beautiful door and entryway. Harry looked up smiling, took hold of the handle on the door and opened it.

Making a grand sweep of his hand, he announced to the others, "Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the Come and Go Room. Will you please step inside.

End of Chapter 21

Next Chapter – Flying with Brooms

Chapter 22 – Flying with Brooms

What greeted the three other students was something that looked like a combination of the Gryffindor common room, and an old-school study from a regal English manor. Harry and the others looked around a bit, and then, after Harry expanded his multi-chambered trunk, went into chamber number eight to train for two 'days' before going out and returning to their own common rooms.

Over the next few weeks this pattern continued and things seemed to get into a flow with school: training; homework; and Ron rushing to the Great Hall for every meal; classes; and, for everyone but Ron, studying in the 'Come and Go Room' every other day.

Hermione was able to convince Ron to finally join them in the 'Come and Go Room' after he saw how much better the other four were performing in class. It didn't hurt any that they also mentioned that Sassy provided all the snacks and food they wanted while they were there.

For the most part everything was going well... with the exception of potions and strangely enough, Defense against the Dark Arts. Every time Harry entered the DADA classroom he would get the feeling that something evil was present in the room. 'Well this is the Defense against the Dark Art's class.' When Harry entered into the classroom for the first time, 'There's bound to be some dark presence here'. Harry thought.

'No, young master,' Durendal said, 'The darkness is not from the 'objects' in the room, but from the man himself. There is something very dark about this professor, and it is closely related to the Dark Lord himself. You must be very careful around this man. If you do not keep your shield up around Voldemort's core, you may find yourself drawn uncontrollable to him. We do not want his core controlling you.'

'Thank you for the warning Durendal,' Harry said, 'This will give me an excuse to strengthen my shields daily.'

Charms class.

"Very good class! Now, open your books and read about the first spell you will be trying in here – 'Wingardium Leviosa'. While you are doing that, I will be handing out feathers for us to practice on."

Ten minutes later everyone was through reading their assignment, and a feather was in front of each student.

"Now," Professor Flitwick started, "The incantation is 'Wingardium Leviosa' remember that little twist and flick we have been practicing while you are pointing your wand at the object you wish to levitate. Ready? Begin!"

The room filled with the sound of children's voices as they began casting their first charm. It wasn't too surprising that many of the Slytherin were first in getting their feathers floating, though not very controlled.

Harry was watching to see how the other students were doing before trying himself.

Ron was making grand circles over the feather, and then shacking his wand at it as if he were beating it up while murdering the enunciation of the spell. Finally Hermione had to stop him before he poked somebody's eye out with his wand, and ended up showing him the correct way to do the spell. You could tell that Ron was very upset by being shown up. Harry just hoped it had nothing to do with the fact that he (Ron) was a pure-blood, and Hermione was a muggle-born.

Seamus and Dean weren't having much better luck then Ron. Their enunciation and wand movement seemed to be correct, but Harry had an idea that their main problem was not focusing on what the expected results of the spell are going to be. Without focus, you do not tap into your magical core to give it direction.

Harry had heard from Susan that Neville seemed to be having much of the same problem as Seamus and Dean. The incantation and wand movement were correct, but it didn't look like his heart was really in casting the spell. Harry thought this might be due to the fact that for the better part of his life, Neville had been told that he was little better than a squib. Harry had ask Susan to remind Neville what they had been practicing in the 'Come and Go Room' after classes tonight.

This night, after entering the 'Come and Go Room', instead of going straight down to chamber eight in Harry's trunk, they decided to sit in the study, around a table talking.

"I just couldn't get it Harry." Ron said, referring to the Charms lesson.

Opening his trunk as if to get something out of it, Harry conjured a feather to put on the table for Ron to try with. However, when Harry turns around, there is already a feather on the table.

"Did I just miss something? Harry asked. "Where did that feather come from? I was just thinking that we needed a feather to practice with, and there it is on the table."

"I don't know Harry." Susan answered. "I thought that maybe it was your doing again"

"No, not me." said Harry holding up the feather he 'retrieved' from his trunk. "Well, we have it now, so let's move on. Ron, why don't you repeat what did in class this morning?"

Taking his wand out, Ron looks at the feather and while moves his arm in a great circle again shouted: "Wingardrem Levaossa". He ends the charm shaking his wand like he's trying to get the last of the catchup out of a bottle. The feather didn't rise, but a fresh Cauldron Cake appeared next to it. Ron was a little embarrassed and upset when he hears some of the others starting to laugh at his performance. Once again Hermione steps in to catch his wand before he puts out somebody's eye again.

"Well that is interesting." Harry said raising an eyebrow.

"Wait, wait Ron, your doing it all wrong!" Hermione starts.

Ron just gives her the 'evil eye' look as if to say 'Well if you know how to do it any better, show us'.

"First Ron, you're saying the spell all wrong. It 'Wingardium' not 'Wingardrem' and 'Leviosa' instead of 'Levaossa'. Here, let me show you." Hermione clears her throat, and with a gentle 'swish and flick' says: "Wingardium Leviosa"! The feather slowly, gently rose off the

table and into the air in front of Hermione just as it had done in class earlier that morning.

"Very good Hermione!" Harry said. "That was a great demonstration. Now Ron, Neville, don't get upset that Susan and Hermione seem to be catching on to these spells a little quicker than you are. It just seems that girls this age seem to pay a bit more attention to the details than us boys. Now Neville, can you tell me what is required to perform a spell successfully?"

"Well, you have to be strong enough to perform the spell, you have to have the incantation, and you have to have the wand motion. Right?" Neville said shyly.

"Well guys what do you think? Is Neville's answer correct?" Harry asked the group.

"That's what both Professor Flitwick and McGonagall said in class." Hermione replied.

"What about intent?" Harry asked.

"What?" came Ron's intelligent reply.

"Intent. What were you thinking about when you were trying to levitate the feather?" Harry asked Ron.

"Well, right then, I was thinking about how long it had been since I've eaten, and was wondering where Sassy was with those Cauldron Cakes." Ron answered, blushing slightly.

Harry's eyebrow goes back up as he looks back at the Cauldron Cake on the table next to the feather.

"That's okay Ron, Sassy will be here in just a few moments. Hermione, what were you thinking of when you levitated the feather?"

"Well, levitating the feather of course!" Hermione said as if it were the most obvious thing in the world.

"Right! And as you thought that, you drew upon your magic from your core to come out, down your arm, into the wand, and to be focused

on the object and action you were trying to perform. Does that make sense to you?"

Both Ron and Neville nod their heads 'Yes'.

"Okay, before we go any further, I think we need to find out what's happening with this room and where this feather and Cauldron Cake came from." Harry said.

"Now, just before the feather appeared, I was thinking that we needed a feather to be placed on the table for Ron to practice with, and the feather appeared."

"We've just heard that Ron was thinking of getting a Cauldron Cake while doing his charm, and the cake shows up on the table. Now, Hermione, if there is one thing you want more than anything else in the world, what would it be?"

Even before she answered, a large impressive tome appeared on the table.

"A self-updating version of 'Hogwarts: A History'." she said, somewhat in ah as she picked up the book.

"Susan, how bout you?" Harry asked.

Suddenly, on the table, there was a picture of Neville in a plain silver frame. The picture of Neville was waving and winking at her, blowing her kisses.

Both the real Neville, and Susan blushed slightly, but then took a step closer to each other.

"Not to interrupt this moment," Harry said, "but Neville, what about you? And please, try not to think too much about Susan. We may not be ready for the results."

Neville and Susan blushed again and Neville said, "I always wanted to have my own Mimulus Mimbletonia since I saw my Great Uncle Algie's before I came to Hogwarts."

Once again, on the table, a strange gray cactus looking plant appeared on the table. It was covered with spiny bulbs that looked

like they were ready to explode. Hermione reached out to touch one but Neville stopped her.

"Don't touch it Hermione! If you don't handle the plant correctly, the tubules will explode and cover you with Stinksap and that is one thing you do not want!"

"Thanks Neville." Hermione said. "I don't think I would like to be covered with that if it's anything like those dung bombs Fred and George keep setting off."

"Oh, this would be much worse!" Neville said. "The Skinksap used in the dung bombs is diluted to about one part per five hundred before it is put into the toys."

"Oh! Thanks again." said Hermione. "Then what is it really used for Neville?"

Neville looked up shyly and answered, "It's used as a bonding agent or catalyst for a lot of the medical potions in the infirmary. But don't worry, it only takes one or two drops per cauldron to get it all to work right. Of course, you don't have to use the Skinksap, but it will take the potion a lot longer to come together."

Harry thought to himself, 'If I could find a replacement for Skinksap I'd make a fortune!'

Shaking his head to get back to the topic at hand Harry said, "Okay, I think I've figured this out."

"The elves call this the 'Come and Go Room' because sometimes it's here and sometimes it isn't. But remember when Fred and George said they needed a broom closet to get away from Filch? They said they found this closet on the seventh floor that they have never been able to find again? That was this room! This room has to power to give you what ever you want at that moment! When I first learned of this room, I thought it would just provide you the things you needed as you entered the room, but it seems that the room will also give you what ever you require once you are in it. A 'Room of Requirements' if you will!"

Just then, a whole tray of Cauldron Cakes and a pitcher of pumpkin juice showed up on the table.

"Stop it Ron, this could be important!" Harry said, and the food disappeared.

"But I 'm hungry!" Ron whined.

"Don't worry, Sassy will be here soon enough with real Cauldron Cakes and drinks."

Then, Harry looked at the roof of the room as if addressing it directly. "We need a place where we can practice and learn how to perform the spells, charms and everything else we are being taught."

At first, nothing happened, then, the room changed from an English study to more of a classroom setting with chairs, blackboard, individual dueling platforms and target practice range. Also, all around the edge of the room were bookshelves filled with every imaginable book on charms, transfiguration, shielding, DADA spells, curses, hexes, jinx and counter-jinx.

Harry noticed that this list of books was almost as complete as the library he had in his trunk. In fact, if he wasn't mistaken, there were a few titles here that he didn't recognize.

"Wow! This is great! Just think of all the studying we can do here!" Hermione said.

Ron groaned, Neville rolled his eyes, but Harry and Susan both agreed with Hermione.

"Okay," Harry said, trying to get everybody's attention, let's all try the levitation charm again.

As he says this, a drawing on the blackboard appears with the name of the spell, the pronunciation, and the correct wand motion.

"Alright now, I want you to all try it one more time again. Neville, let's start with you, but remember, you have to have intent to make the charm work.

Neville looked over at Harry for a few moments thinking about what he had said to him. Then, with a determined look on his face, he closed his eyes to concentrate on his magic inside. As Neville

brought up his magic, Harry could sense that this was going to be a major event and gets his own wand ready.

With a look of determination on his face, Neville yells out – "Wingardium Leviosa"! As loudly as he could.

Not only does the feather shoot straight up into the air, but also Susan who was sitting right in front of him, and the desk she was sitting at.

The shocked girl doesn't have time to react before she found herself heading toward the ceiling at a high rate of speed. Harry takes out his wand and shouts: "Mobilicorpus" as quickly as he can at the Susan and pulls her out of harms away, and set her gently on the ground.

Neville is so shocked to see what happens that he screams and drops his wand. As he drops his wand, the spell is broken, and the desk fell down to earth with a crash! In looking up at the ceiling, everyone sees that the feather has been imbedded into the stone.

Everyone in the room, with the exception of Harry and Susan, just stared at Neville, or the feather in the ceiling in a state of shock. Not a word was said until Susan was back on the ground. As soon as her feet hit the ground, she ran off and gave Neville the biggest hug he ever had in his life.

"I'm so proud of you Neville! That was so amazing! I knew you could do it!" Susan said excitedly.

Everyone else in the room was in shock! Didn't Susan know she could have been seriously injured if Harry hadn't moved her out of the desk? Maybe so, but Susan was just so glad to see that Neville wasn't a squib, that the other issue wasn't important to her right now.

"I think we need to practice a little on 'control' right now." Harry said.

With a weak smile Neville shook his head in agreement, still in shock at what had happened, and that Susan was still hugging him after what he had done to her.

By the end of the 'class time', everyone had mastered the levitation charm – even Ron. Sassy had made sure he had had as many Cauldron Cakes and Pumpkin juice as he could stand.

"Well," Harry began, "I think we have a decision to make with regards to our training. We can either come in here and everyone come down into my trunk to train in chamber eight for more time, or we could stay out of the trunk, and let the room provide us with the ideal training environment. Which do you prefer? Hermione?"

"I prefer the this training environment. I mean, look at all these great book titles! I know you would probable have most of them in your library Harry, but we don't always have permission to get them out of there. It almost as bad as if they were in the restricted area of the library! Here, we can come in, and with a thought have any book or training environment we need."

"Okay. How about you Susan?"

"Oh, I agree with Hermione. I think the quality of the training environment more then makes up for the increased time in the trunk – sorry about that Harry."

"Don't worry about it Susan, that's why I'm asking. How bout you Ron?"

"I think this room is best, as long as Sassy can keep us fed!"

"Okay, I'll see that you have a supply of Cauldron Cakes when every you need them, but remember, you'll have to work them off, or else you may start looking like Crabbe or Goyle."

"Hey!" Ron protested, but to no good – as everyone else was laughing in a good natured way.

"Well Neville, what's your opinion on the matter?" Harry asked.

Neville looked thoughtful for a few moments, and then said, "I think as far as learning the spells, this is the best environment to do that. But still once in a while, I think it would be beneficial to be able to go the chamber eight and practice what we learn, and gain more control over them." Then blushing he added, "Lord knows I could

use more control over my spells, I mean, just look at what almost happened to Susan."

"I think that's a great idea Neville. Why don't we do this, every night we'll come here to review what was taught in each class for that day, and then, over the weekend, we can come here, but go into chamber eight and put it all together, and do the rest of our homework so that we're ready for the coming week?"

After a little bit of debate (mainly from Ron) the group decided that they would leave their Saturday's free to just be first year students, but they would get together Sunday afternoon after lunch to spend four hours in chamber eight. That would work out to five full days, enough time to review the previous week, and have everything ready for the coming week. They would still be out of the trunk in time for dinner that evening, so Ron wouldn't miss any meals.

The day soon came when all the first year students headed out to the quidditch fields for their first flying lessons.

Neville had been very anxious about flying. He had never been allowed to fly while living with his Gran, and now he just knew he was going to make a fool of himself.

Harry slowed his pace down so he could talk to Neville on their way out.

"Neville, I know how this might sound right now, but don't worry about it. You've just had two binds removed from your core – it's going to take you time to get use to the new power levels, but look how far you've come with your spells in the last few weeks with us in 'The Room'. I'm sure after some training in the trunk, most of your control issues will be solved, then it will just be a matter of practice and finding out just what you can do."

"Thanks Harry, I look forward to the training."

Just then Susan Bones came up to the pair, and slipped her arm into Neville's. Neville blushed deeply as soon as this happened, but couldn't deny he enjoyed her company.

"I want you to know I'm proud of you Neville. My Aunt told me about the first war with You-know-who and the aurors that fought him. She

always spoke of your parents with kindness and respect. I knew you would be a great wizard with parents like that." Then she reached up and kissed Neville on the cheek.

Neville took his hand up to his cheek where Susan had kissed him and just stayed there for a minute. Right now Neville was in bliss. Harry gave him a slap on the back and said, "Way to go Nev! Eleven years old and already a babe magnet!"

Neville just looked at Harry again, blushing, and continued walking up to the quidditch patch.

Shortly after arriving there, their instructor, Madam Hooch arrived. She had short, gray hair, and yellow eyes.

In a very business like manner she said, "Well, what are you waiting for? Everyone stand by a broomstick with the broom on their right side. Ready? Stick out your right hand over the broom and say 'UP!'"

Everyone said 'UP' as they had been instructed with mixed results. Harry could see that again the students who had been raised in a magical household had better getting the brooms to come up then the muggle raised, or muggle born. This was just something that the students raised with magic would have taken for granted. Most probable had training broom, and so were use to calling their broom up, while those like Hermione and Seamus were not.

"Come on! Put some feeling into it!" Madam Hooch said.

Finally, everyone had their broom in their hand.

Next, Madam Hooch showed everyone how to mount the boom. Harry had to smile to himself when she told Draco Malfoy that he was doing it wrong.

"Now, when I blow my whistle on three, I want you to kick off from the ground, hover for a few moments, keeping your brooms under control, and then press the broom forward and come straight back down. Ready? One... Two..."

Before Madam Hooch could get to 'Three' Neville kicked off the ground with the look of determination on his face, much as he looked in the Room of Requirements when he first did the levitation

spell on his feather. His broom went straight up so fast that it took everyone by surprise. He now had a death-grip on the broom handle and was trying to point it somewhere safe, however his movements were so large, wild, erratic and jerkier, that the broom would over correct to each time. Neville was frightened as to what might happen.

In a flash, Harry was on his broom heading for Neville. When he got close he yelled out to the frightened young man; "Just use small movements Neville! Small movements! Think about what you want the broom to do! You don't have to try all that hard!"

Slowly Neville started to calm down. It helped having Harry up there with him giving him encouragement and instructions. He finally got the broom flying straight and started feeling more in control. Listening to Harry some more, he made a gentle turn and headed back down to the other students. Harry continued to talk Neville down, telling him how to slowdown, and finally, how to land without crashing.

Once everyone was on the ground, Madam Hooch started yelling at Neville for failing to listen to the instructor. Neville, of course felt terrible about the whole thing and blushed heavily as he apologized to the flight instructor.

"You were very fortunate to have such a fine flier as Mr. Potter here that could get up there and talk you down like he did! Five points from Hufflepuff!" Turning to Harry, Madam Hooch continued, "Yes, that was some exceptional flying up there today Mr. Potter! It reminded me a great deal of how your father, James, used to fly. However, it would seem that you have your mother Lily's ability to explain the very complicated in very simple terms to where anyone can understand. Yes, you did an outstanding job up there today. Five points to Gryffindor!"

Everyone was thrilled that things had turned out all right and that no one was hurt. Some of the less 'sensitive' people in the group (all of Slytherin – led by Draco Malfoy, part of Ravenclaw, and even part of Gryffindor) made fun of Neville and his problems and losing points, while his home house of Hufflepuff was very supportive of him. A glare and growl from Harry soon had all the Gryffindor's in line and even some of the Ravenclaw were smart enough to know that you did not want to tick Harry Potter off.

Once everyone was settled down, Madam Hooch continued with the broomstick management and usage. After that everything went fine. At the end of the lesson, after a few more basic exercises, Madam Hooch announced the last activity. "As a final test today, we will have all of you students fly three laps around the quidditch field." A mix of cheers and groins could be heard from the students. "You will be judged on the quality of your flying. Not your speed, not for any 'technique' you think you might have, just your flying. Keep your brooms straight and level, and your speed constant. Alright now everyone line up. Ready? One, Two, Three, Go!"

Everyone makes it off the ground safely. Harry stays near Neville and Hermione to give them encouragement and assistance if they need it. Ron loves the feel of being able to finally ride a broom without having to first check it for one of Fred or George's jinxes.

Neville and Hermione were now flying on their own with Harry close by. It looked a little funny with Neville and Hermione concentrating so hard on flying straight and level, and Harry, on his broom 'driving in reverse'... facing forward on his broom, but flying backwards... giving them encouragement and tips on their flying. Madam Hooch just looked up at Harry and shook her head. You weren't supposed to be able to fly like that as a first year.

As Harry nears the Slytherin section of the quidditch stadium on the final lap, a round, jet-black medium-sized iron ball comes flying out of the stands, and heads straight for him at high speed. Since Harry was flying backward on his broom, he had a clear view of the flying metal ball coming straight for him. Sensing that it meant him harm, Harry broke from the Neville, Hermione and the rest of the students and heads down towards the field. At the last moment Harry had to roll under his broom to avoid being hit in the back of the head.

"IT'S A BLUDGER HARRY!" Ron shouts. "THEY ARE USED IN QUIDDITCH TO KNOCK PLAYERS OFF THEIR BROOMSTICKS!"

"Thanks Ron! I know what they are, but why is it after me?" Harry yells back.

"I don't know! Just don't let it get you! Maybe Madam Hooch can catch it or stop it!"

Madam Hooch had indeed seen the bludger come out of the stand heading straight for Harry. She immediately took her wand out to summon the bludger down to her, by either she did not hit the iron ball, or it somehow replied the spell and kept on heading towards Mr. Potter. After several other failed attempts, she sent a quick communication spell to both Professors Dumbledore, and McGonagall.

Professor Dumbledore was unavailable at the time, but Professor McGonagall came out to the field as quickly as possible flying on her own Comet 120 that she'd used as a Chaser during her days on the Gryffindor quidditch team.

She stood next to Madam Hooch, watching in amazement as the young Mr. Potter continued to dive, twist, duck, roll, flare, and accelerate with the grace of someone who had been flying for years.

"How long has he been dodging that bludger?" Professor McGonagall asked with a bit of ah in her voice.

"It's almost been twenty minutes now. The rest of the students were told to get down as soon as it appeared. Mr. Potter has been doing a remarkable job of not only avoiding the bludger, but also keeping the other students safe."

"Let's see if we can't put an end to this little fiasco, shall we?" Professor McGonagall said. "Please see if you can get Mr. Potter to bring the bludger over here?"

Madam Hooch signaled to Harry to have him come over to where she and Professor McGonagall were now standing. While she was doing this, Professor McGonagall was conjuring a metal cage to capture the rouge bludger in.

Harry saw what the Professor was doing, and so took his time to line up his approach so that the bludger would be close to him, and wouldn't have time to avoid the cage.

As he turned to make his run for the last time, Professor McGonagall levitated the cage up to where it would be a safe distance from them, but still allow them to make the catch.

Harry knew it would be close; he would have to be coming at just about head level with Professor McGonagall and Madam Hooch, and then pull up hard to bring the bludger into the cage. He also had to be careful as to not become tangled in the chain hanging down from the cage or hit the cage on his way.

It was going to be close. Harry was pushing the school's old Comet 160 as hard and as fast as it could go. He could hear and feel the bludger slowly coming closer and closer to him. His timing would have to be perfect if they were going to catch this ball. Pushing as hard as he could, Harry tried to ignore the pain in his hand, shoulders, and legs, and the sweat that was running in his eyes. Ten seconds more... was he lined up with the box? Five seconds more... would he be too close to the bludger to pull this off? NOW! Harry pulled up as hard as he could, his head and broom just flying past the conjured metal box. CLANG! The bludger hit the box, and was trapped immediately inside. As soon as the bludger became trapped, it stopped flying all together, as if it knew it could not get away. Professor McGonagall lowered the box, and decided to take it back to the castle for Professor Dumbledore to inspect, to see if they could determine who had set the bludger after Mr. Potter.

Harry did a victory roll on the old Comet, and then came in for a landing close to Madam Hooch, and his head of house.

"Boy, I don't think I've had this much fun flying ever!" Harry said a little winded. He took the time to stretch and shake out the stiffness in his hands and joints. "My guardian never charmed a bludger to chase me like that! If it weren't for the fact that it was trying to hurt me, I'd be tempted to ask you when I could do that again Madam Hooch!"

Professor McGonagall raised an eyebrow as Madam Hooch stifled a laugh. "That is quite alright Mr. Potter; I do believe you have shown you have a basic understanding as to how to use a broom."

"That is quite correct. Now, Madam Hooch, if you are through with this student, I would like to have Mr. Potter escort me back to the Castle." Professor McGonagall said, sounding almost cold.

Harry misunderstood Professor McGonagall's attitude. He thought she was upset at him for the flippant way he was handling the situation, which was not the case. Professor McGonagall was upset

about Harry being chased by the bludger at all. 'Who would do something like that to a first year student?' She thought. 'He could have been seriously injured if he would have been hit by it. I don't look forward to telling Remus and Sirius about this.'

Harry followed behind quietly as Professor McGonagall weaved her way through the corridors of the castle. Stopping in front of the DADA class room she instructed Harry to please stay where he was. Opening the door, Professor McGonagall addressed Professor Quirrell; "Excuse me Professor, could I please speak to Wood for a moment? Thank you."

"Wood, I have found you a seeker!" Professor McGonagall said.

By dinnertime, everyone in school knew that Harry Potter was the new seeker on the Gryffindor House quidditch team. Ron suddenly felt much better about hanging around Harry, as now he was being looked at (in Ron's mind) as a quidditch star.

After dinner, Professor Dumbledore asked if he could meet with Lord Potter in his office.

"I'll meet you guys back in the common room after I get through meeting with the Headmaster."

As Harry approached the Gargoyles protecting the Headmasters office, they appeared for a moment to bow their heads and then move aside for the Heir of Ravenclaw without Harry having to give the password.

Reaching the top of the stairs, Harry knocked gently to announce his presence.

"Come in Harry." Professor Dumbledore said.

As Harry opened the door, his eyes were more than just a little set as a cold demeanor crossed his face. "I have warned you before Headmaster, only my friends are permitted to address me by my given name. You will address me as Mr. Potter or Lord Potter."

"Or perhaps Lord Ravenclaw?" Professor Dumbledore's eyes twinkling brightly thinking that he had something that he could use to manipulate Harry with.

"That salutation is not an option for you." Harry replied coldly without blinking an eye. "I do not wish to make my lineage and heritage to become public knowledge yet." Then looking Professor Dumbledore directly in the eye he stated. "You will abide by this... request... if you do not want me as an enemy, and if you wish to remain Headmaster of this school." Harry let a bit of his aura flair, and asked the school to confirm his words to the Headmaster.

Hogwarts agreed and Professor Dumbledore found himself in a very unpleasant situation of being cut off from the school for a few moments.

To say that Professor Dumbledore was shaken would be an understatement. Since becoming Headmaster, there had never been a time when he did not have complete access to the school, its wards, portraits, and ghosts. All those things that kept him informed as to what was going on in the school.

When Professor Dumbledore felt the school's presences again he was visibly relieved, and slumped down into his chair.

"Now, was there anything else you wished to discuss this evening Headmaster?" Harry asked calmly.

"Yes...Lord Potter... I was wondering what you knew as to Mr. Longbottom's suddenly increased magical abilities?"

"Quite a bit actually." Harry replied – but then said nothing more.

"Would you mind enlightening me?" The Headmaster pleaded.

"I believe you will recall that I sent you a letter telling you that my parents had discovered the binds that you had convinced the Ministry to put on all new-born babies with a power level greater than 40 in an attempt to keep the upcoming generation 'weak' so that they would be less likely to become, or follow after a dark wizard. I pointed out the falsehood of that position in that if my parents could find that out, other parents could also. If these other parents had 'dark' tendencies, then the only thing you have accomplished is to handicap the upcoming generation that will be called upon to battle these new dark lords."

"When I met Neville, Ron, Hermione and Susan on the train to Hogwarts, I tested them and found that only Hermione's core was unbound. I took it upon myself to remove the binds from the other three making sure to keep notes as to what their power rating were before and after the release of the bind."

"This next information is only to be released to you, the Deputy Headmistress, Charms Master, and the attending Healer." Harry looked at the Headmaster with a stone-cold glare. "If I find that this information has been reviled to any other person, I will hold you personally responsible. Is that understood?"

Receiving an affirmative response from the Headmaster, Harry continued:

"Hermione's power rating was at 485 placing her at the high end of the 'Low-powered Wizard' category."

"Susan Bones initial power rating was at 220 before removing the bind on her magical core. Afterward, she had a power rating of 345. About a fifty percent increase over her previous reading."

"With Ron, there were similar results. He started at 240 and increased to 480 after the bind was removed."

"When I went and looked at Neville, I found that his initial power rating was 130 – just over a squab. But when I looked for a bind on his magical core, I found two binds instead of one!"

"When I removed the bind that had been placed on him at birth, his power rating doubled to 260. After removing the second bind his power rating went to 720! That places Neville in the middle of the 'Standard Power Wizard' category. Who knows what it may have been if someone hadn't placed those binds on his core."

"Neville's main problem right now is learning how to control that much more energy. One of the side effects of this new power though is a more confident young man. I plan on doing everything in my power to see that confidence increase."

"One of the things I found over the past few years is that Alice Longbottom was meant to be my God-mother, and Lily Potter was meant to be Neville's God-mother. I told Neville that that makes us

god-brothers – or as good as brothers (you might even say my brother from a different mother). And I will protect and defend my brother – even if he is one day older than I am." Harry said this last bit with a smirk on his face.

"How do you think we should proceed with the other students Harr... Lord Potter?" Professor Dumbledore asked.

"First, you need to convince the Ministry and St. Mungo's to have the practice of binding an infants core at birth stopped immediately! All other children under the age of seventeen need to be tested either here, or at St. Mungo's.

I believe Pure-blood, Mixed Blood – magically raised, Mixed Blood – muggle raised, and muggle born should be tested in that order.

"If I may inquiry my Lord Potter, what is your power rating?" The Headmaster asked.

Harry just smiled and said. "Would you allow your power rating to revealed Headmaster? I didn't think so."

"My parents put a protective amulet on me when I was just a baby, that amulet prevents anyone, even me, from getting a good power reading on me. The amulet was put on by my father, and could only be removed by him to prevent any damage to either myself, or the amulet (that was a lie, but Dumbledore didn't need to know). Besides, after my father put the amulet on me, it apparently fused with me over my heart, so there's no way for me to take it off without doing some research first."

"Is there anything else Headmaster?"

"Yes, what were the charms you used on your friends?"

Again Harry smiled as he addressed the Headmaster.

"I have already given you two of the three charms earlier, but if you must know, there were three spells that we used on the train. You will be under the same restrictions as before as to who can know and use these spells. If I find that a Potions Master has learned these spells, I will again hold you personally responsible."

"The spells are:

o – ostendere virtus compresco (Show or Reveal the power block)

o – amoveo virtus compresco (Remove power block)"

o – magnitudo de magica (size of magic)

"Now sir, if there is nothing further, I wonder if I might have a few moments with my mentor."

"Your mentor? Who would that be Lord Potter?" The Headmaster asked somewhat confused.

"Sir Toppum sir... you know, the 'Sorting Hat'. He did ask me to be his apprentice and I did agree. I wish to check in and see if he has any instructions for me."

"Oh... I guess that would be alright. I'm not use to having... um... Sir Toppum out for much more then the Sorting. Just be careful with ... ah... his. He is quite old." Dumbledore stuttered.

"Yes sir." Harry replied.

Going over to the shelf that held the Sorting Hat, Harry conjured a chair to sit in comfortably and carefully took the Sorting Hat off the shelf. After sitting himself down, he placed the Sorting Hat on his head, and started to meditate, to go to that mind-scape where he could meet with Sir Robert Toppum.

'Well Lord Potter, how have you been enjoying yourself here at Hogwarts so far?'

'To be totally honest with you, it's been a little trying. The classes are much less then I expected them to be, and the rivalry between the houses do nothing to add to a healthy teaching environment.

'I'm sure you heard of the little excitement I had out on the quidditch field with the rogue bludger? Have they been able to figure out who enchanted it?' Harry asked.

'No, in fact by the time Professor McGonagall brought it up to the Headmasters chamber it it had vanished.' Sir Toppum replied.

'That means that it was a conjured bludger, not one of the schools, or some other students. That would mean that we are looking for someone who has above standard wizards power or even a Low Sorcerer. But what I wonder is if the person who conjured it was out there on the field, or if they had conjured and charmed it earlier and placed it there so they wouldn't get caught... I wonder.' Harry thought to himself, as he tried to determine who would be able to do something like this.

'Well, I think that will have to wait for another day. Is there anything you would like me to be doing over the next few weeks Sir?' Harry asked his most unusual mentor.

'No Harry, not really. You are here mainly to learn how to socialize with others your own age, and to show them the true meaning of being a member of their respective house.

'I am quite pleased that you have already developed friends among the Hufflepuffs, but do not forget the other houses. It took the combined effort of all four of the founders to build Hogwarts, and it will take all four houses to fight the coming darkness in the land.

'I am also quite pleased that you have found the founders' training and storage room. Godric was always in there practicing with his weapons, or Rowena practicing one of her new charms. Helga preferred the out of doors in her greenhouses, or down in the kitchen teaching the house-elves a new recipe, and Salazar the dungeons to keep all his potions and experiments to himself – except when he was in his secret chamber.'

'Secret chamber?' Harry asked.

'Yes, secret chamber. I'm sure your house elf Ty told you about it. The one with the Basilisk in it. All of the founders had a place set aside connected to the castle, where they could go and work or study away from everyone else.

'Currently, you are the only recognized heir of the founders, however, there are two more in your little group that could be heirs – or the descendants (family member) of the heir – if they possessed the talisman of their forebears. The Weasley family is the most direct family to Gryffindor, while the Bones are the most direct family of Hufflepuff.

'Come to think of it, you could be considered the heir of Slytherin since you defeated Tom Riddle when you were a baby. That would make you the heir by conquest! We must get the Book of Slytherin to see if you can read it!' Sir Toppum said excitedly.

Harry, for his part was both shocked and unnerved to hear this information.

'Do you know where the talismans currently are being held at?' Harry asked slowly. He remembered what the Goblins had said about the Headmaster having all but one talisman of the founders. That he was trying to collect all four so he could declare himself the rightful 'owner' (ruler) of Hogwarts.

'I know that the Headmaster has them. In fact, the Sword of Gryffindor is in the display case on the shelf over there. But as to where he has Helga's chalice, or Salazar's book, no, I do not know.' Sir Toppum replied sadly.

'Then it looks like I'll have to 'ask' him for them, doesn't it?' Harry said with a slight smirk on his face.

'Be careful young ward, the Headmaster is not use to having his actions challenged.' Sir Toppum reminded Harry.

'Don't worry sir, I have already addressed this subject with the Headmaster. If he knows what is good for him, he will give me the talisman's. Thank you sir, I will be talking to you again soon.' With that, Harry took the Sorting Hat off his head and placed it back on the shelf.

Harry stood up, and turned to face the Headmaster again.

He found Professor Dumbledore looking quite uneasy as he faced him.

"Well, Harr... Lord Potter, did Sir Toppum have anything interesting to say?" He asked.

"Well, in fact, yes, he did Headmaster." Harry responded.

"He mentioned that you had yet to return the talisman's to their rightful heirs." As Harry spoke, the Sword of Roland appeared in his hand.

Professor Dumbledore paled as he saw the sword appear in Harry's hand. This meant that Harry was still worthy to hold the great sword, and that if he wanted to, he could 'judge' the Headmaster again to see if his heart was pure.

Dumbledore started to stutter, "M... My Lord," he started, looking at the sword. "You do not understand. I.. If I were to openly return these item to the heir families, it would not only cause irreparable damage to the side of the light, not to mention give Lord Voldemort a tool that we may have no defense for."

Harry smile looked almost feral as his sword started to glow.

"That won't be a problem Headmaster since I have an option for you that will insure that the light side is not divided, and Tom doesn't get his hands on Salazar's book."

The Headmaster seemed quite shocked that Harry knew the true identity of Lord Voldemort.

"How do you propose that this is done then?" He asked.

Still smiling, Harry said, "You will give me all three items. I know the families they belong to. And I can assure you that Tom will not get his hands on the book."

"But how is that possible? Even if he is a half-blood, he is still the most direct heir of the House of Slytherin."

"You forget Headmaster. The heir of Slytherin was defeated in single combat, and as such, has passed on his title to the one that defeated him."

Harry didn't really want to disclose this to the Headmaster yet, but it seemed to be the only way that he would trust him in this plan.

The Headmaster looked at Harry for a few moments what the fact of the matter to sink in. Then, as the truth of Harry's statement hit

home. Slumping back in his chair, all Dumbledore could do is look at Harry with his mouth wide open.

"Careful Headmaster, Fawkes may chose to build a nest in your mouth if you don't close it." Harry joked.

Closing his mouth, Professor Dumbledore tried one last time to reach his ultimate goal.

"Harry... Lord Potter, would not it be easier for me to keep all four talisman's safe rather then returning them to their families where they too could be 'taken' through single combat?"

Harry temper exploded when the Headmaster made this suggestion, knowing full well what his real intent was.

His eyes glowed bright green, while the Sword of Roland burst into a bright red flame. The entire castle of Hogwarts was shacking in rage at the audacity of the Headmaster. For a moment, it seemed that Hogwarts' its self were about to tear its self apart.

"YOU HAVE NO RIGHTS TO THOSE ITEMS!" Harry yelled. "HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENED AT GRINGOTTS BANK AND THE BOARD OF INQUIRY? BRING THE ITEMS TO ME AT ONCE OR FACE THE JUDGEMENT OF DURENDAL, SWORD OF ROLAND, SWORD OF POTTER!"

For a few moments Professor Dumbledore sat there quivering in fear. He knew he had 'stepped cross the line', but he felt that he had to try just one more time.

For his part, Fawkes was looking very sadly at the Headmaster for the way he was behaving. He had noticed since he had bonded himself to the Headmaster, that his heart and intentions had changed. He saw in young Harry was indeed pure of heart, and besides, one of his animagus forms was that of a Bennu – early relation of the Phoenix. Making up his mind, Fawkes lifted off his stand, and started singing a sad song of termination. He was breaking his bond with Professor Dumbledore so that he could join Harry.

As Harry and Professor Dumbledore heard the song, they both felt sad. You could tell that this was a very difficult decision for Fawkes to make.

Professor Dumbledore could feel the bond grow weaker and weaker between himself and Fawkes. It had been there so long, he had forgotten what it felt like. But now as it was becoming weaker and weaker, he began to see just what his decisions had cost him.

"Fawkes! Please! NO! Don't leave me!" The Headmaster cried. Then in a smaller voice, "I need you." But it was to no avail. At that time Dumbledore felt the last of his connection with Fawkes slip away, leaving him alone for the first time in many years.

Fawkes flew around for a few more moments before landing on Harry's shoulder.

'Young one, I feel I can no longer stay with this wizard due to a mighty change in his heart for the worst. May I join with you to help you on your path in the light?' Fawkes asked Harry in his mind.

Harry looked over at the Headmaster who was crying bitterly, as if he had just lost a close loved one. He realized that that is exactly what had happened. Professor Dumbledore had just lost a companion of over forty years and was deeply hurt from the loss!

Looking back at Fawkes, Harry lowered his head, then looked back up into the Phoenix's eyes.

'What about this one Fawkes?' Meaning the Headmaster. 'We need him on our side if we are to prevail. I am afraid that if you abandon him completely, he will become a great menace to the light. He may feel that the light has abandoned him, so why shouldn't he do the same?'

Fawkes looked back at his long time companion and asked, 'What do you think I should do then young one?'

Harry replied, 'Stay here with him and watch him. Sing for him and ease his pain and his burden. If he returns completely to the way of the light, you may choose bond with him again. I would be willing to wait until he has moved on to the next great adventure before you

bond with me, if you still want to. In the mean time, you could help me in developing my talents as a Bennu.'

Fawkes frowned a little. 'It is not normal for a Phoenix to stay where he is not bonded.'

'Well then,' Harry said, 'Could you not bond yourself to Hogwarts? As I understand it, it is nearly a sentient being?'

'An excellent suggestion young one!' Fawkes exclaimed. 'That would allow me to help the Headmaster as well as the other heir's or their descendants while there are here, or where every they might go!'

With that Fawkes again took to flight, singing a new song. A song of bonding between himself and the castle.

The Headmaster stopped crying and looked up as he heard the new song. He felt the connection again between himself and Fawkes, but this time it was different. This time, it was as if he could feel Fawkes via the castle!

As Fawkes finished his song, and bonding with Hogwarts, he came and stood in front of the Headmaster, looking him in the eye.

"Thank you Fawkes for not leaving me totally alone." The Headmaster said.

Fawkes looked at the Headmaster as if to say, 'Don't press your luck with me young man.'

Dumbledore looked down from Fawkes' gaze and said, "Of course old friend, I will try to stay worthy of your presences."

Looking up at Harry, Professor Dumbledore asked: "I know that I am no longer bonded to Fawkes, how is it that I can feel him once again?"

"He has decided to bond with Hogwarts herself, and by virtue of your position as headmaster, you also have access to Fawkes. In addition, all heir's and their descendants can call upon Fawkes for help if they are found worthy. Now, Headmaster, I believe you still have several things that do not belong to you..." Harry left the question open.

"Of course Lord Potter, one moment please." With that Professor Dumbledore got up from his desk and went into a hidden room. When he returned, he had a golden chalice and a large, leather-bound tome. He set them on the table, and then went over to the shelf and retrieved the Sword of Gryffindor.

Harry looked at Fawkes, and asked: 'My friend, could you please take these items to the fifth chamber of my trunk in the founder training and storage room? What we call the 'Room of Requirements'. I need to get down there to help my friends.'

Fawkes look at Harry for a moment, bobbed his head, and then lifted himself up off the desk and on to the pile of founder's items. In a flash he was gone, and in another flash he was back – minus the founder's items.

"If there is nothing else Headmaster, I will be returning to my common room."

"Thank you Lord Potter, you have been very helpful today."

After leaving the Headmaster's office, instead of returning to the Gryffindor common room, Harry went to the Room of Requirements where he knew his friends would be. Everyone was there in the classroom setting practicing the charms and transfiguration from today's lessons.

"Ron, Susan? I need you to write a letter to your parents and all of your siblings, or Aunt in your case Susan, to see how quickly they can all get to Gringotts."

Ron and Susan both looked up from their studies with a questioned look on their faces.

"I have just found out some important information regarding you and your families, and it must be attended to quickly." Harry said with a sense of urgency in his voice.

"What is it Harry? Is something wrong?" Ron asked.

"No, nothings wrong, in fact, you could say something is very right!" Harry replied. "I have just come across somethings that belonged to your families a long time ago, and need to be returned."

Susan let out a little gasp as her mind raced as to what the item could be. She remembered hearing stories in her family regarding the challis of Hufflepuff being in her family a long time ago.

"Harry?" Susan asked.

"I'm sorry Susan, but I can't tell you or Ron what it is until we get you and your families to Gringotts."

"Harry, why can't you tell us anything?" Hermione inquired.

Harry looked at Hermione for a few moments before responding, "There are somethings that need to remain private at this time since some people could get seriously injured if this information became public knowledge to soon. So please, don't ask any more questions. This does not concern you."

Hermione was shocked at Harry's abrupt tone of voice with her, and the fact that there was something out there that she didn't know about. However, one look at Harry told her that he was completely serious, so she let the matter drop.

Neville gasped to hear Harry's tone of voice also. What ever this was, it was BIG!

"I'm sure my Aunt can come to Gringotts at a moments notice Harry, but why is it so important for her to come?" Susan asked with a shacking voice. She wasn't doing a very good job of keeping the anticipation and fear out of her voice.

Harry just looked at Susan without saying a word. He knew that Susan already suspected what this was all about, but in the presence of the others he couldn't say anything.

For her part, Susan just dropped her head, and started writing her letter.

Ron was watching between Harry and the others and was starting to get a little scared. What was this all about?

"Har.. Harry?" Ron asked. "Most of my families is here at Hogwarts, but I've got Mum, Dad and Ginny and the Burrow, Bill in Egypt, and Charles is in Romania, so how am I to get the mail to them quickly, and get back to Gringotts?"

Harry thought for a moment and said: "Just write a letter that we can copy three times and I'll see if Fawkes will deliver them for you. If I'm right, Fawkes will be able to bring them to Gringotts when the time is right."

"But Harry," Hermione started, "Fawkes is the Headmaster's Phoenix. Why do you think he will do this for you?"

Harry had anticipated this question from Hermione and had thought up an answer already.

"Hermione, Fawkes is bound to the school, and as such will help any worthy student if the need is great enough." It was a true statement as far as it went, but he didn't feel he had to mention that Fawkes was also bound to the founder heir's as well.

Harry got busy writing his own letter to Remus, Sirius, and Professors McGonagall and Flitwick. Only Remus and Sirius would be going with him to the Bank, but he felt he owed it to the others to let them know what had happened between him and the Headmaster, and Fawkes.

When Harry and the others were through with their letters, he called Fawkes to have him deliver them to the appropriate people. Afterward, he called for Sassy.

Immediately the little house elf was there to help her master.

"Could you please setup chamber eight for five days of training for all of us?"

"It will be my pleasure Master Harry."

"Come on everyone, let's work on controlling our magic while we wait for our answers.."

End chapter 22.

Next Chapter Outrage at the Ministry

A/N

I do wish to thank all of you who have reviewed the story and written directly to me. I'm sorry for all my typo's etc. I do not have MS Word to help with grammar and such (OpenOffice is somewhat limited).

Also thanks to those have suggested ideas that may be included in the future (Shona Katt, your idea about using some of these spells to help squib's is just brilliant!)

Thanks again for your support.

Rick

Chapter 23 - Outrage at the Ministry

It had taken the better part of a week to get to the point where everyone could be at Gringotts at one time, Harry thought it would be a good idea so the other heirs would know that they had an ally.

It was decided that they would all meet at Gringotts on Saturday morning at 10:00 AM.

Harry had already gone to Gringotts to return the heir's artifacts, and to have the heir claim of the Weasley's and Bones' confirmed, and Sir Toppums claim of his right to the heir of Slytherin by conquest also confirmed.

The goblins were more than a little surprised when he showed up with the three missing heir item. They realized that Harry could have taken over 'rule' of Hogwarts if he had wanted to... But a Paladin didn't do things like that now did they.

They were even more surprised when they found out that his claim to the heir of Slytherin was in fact valid.

The only thing that was left now was that the claimants present themselves at Gringotts and have the Founder's artifacts show that they excepted them.

Harry wondered how this was to be done. He didn't remember the Staff of Ravenclaw doing anything 'very' special when he received it.

The Goblins explained that the fact that he was Ravenclaw's Heir by blood was proof enough. There was also the fact that Raven, Lady Ravenclaw's personal house-elf came at his command and delivered the Book of Ravenclaw to him.

Since that time, Harry had been thinking what he could do to have Salazar's book accept him.

He knew that the book was sealed. It appeared that a large black asps was acting like a lock around the book. Whenever he got near the book, it would begin to talk to him: 'Are you my new master? Beware young one, only those who possess the greatest gift can access the book of my creator.'

"Did you hear that Goldridge?" Harry asked.

"All I hear is that damn book hiss at me." Goldridge replied.

"No, no. It asked if I was it's new master!" Harry said seriously.

Goldridge looked at him and just shook his head and went about his business.

Harry decided to see if 'Ma' could help him out in this situation.

'Ma? Am I going crazy? Did you hear what the tome said?' Harry asked.

'Yes Harry I did.' 'Ma' replied

'Well then, who's right? Me or Goldridge? Did the book hiss, or did it say something?'

'Well Harry, that's just it... you're both right. The book did hiss, but you could understand what it was saying, couldn't you?'

'Well, yes, I could.' Harry replied, wondering what 'Ma' was trying to get at.

'It would appear that the guardian of the book speaks in parseltongue.' 'Ma' said.

'Well, that's good then isn't it?' Harry started out. 'I mean, if you can understand it through the translator, then you can tell me what it wants can't you 'Ma'?''

'No Harry, it's not that easy.' 'Ma' said. 'Parseltongue is not something that can be translated into English. It is a magical language that is used to talk to snakes and other reptile type creatures like Dragons and such. What I heard was a hissing, but when the sound got close to Tom Riddle's power core, I could hear the words translated into English. It would appear that Mr. Riddle was a parselmouth, and as a result of you having a piece of his core in you, so are you.'

Harry was shocked with what his 'Ma' was saying to him. He was a parsalmouth because some crazy man killed his parents and tried to kill him.

'Lady Potter is correct my Lord,' the essences of Durendal joined in on the conversation. 'I would encourage you to devote a good deal of time learning this language as it can be very helpful to you in communicating with dangerous animals, and also making it so your opposition does not know what spell you are casting.'

Harry thought about the problem for a minute. 'If the book speaks in parsaltongue, then it is probable looking for a master that can speak parsaltongue in return. But how can I speak a language that I can't learn through the knowledge sphere?'

'I do not know Master Harry.' Durendal said, 'but let us think on this until we return with the others on Saturday.'

Harry waited with the others at Hogwarts for Saturday to arrive. Classes continued as usual, but Harry had a hard time concentrating on them. He was trying to think of a way that he could communicate with Salazar's Book.

Finally the day came. After breakfast, Harry, Susan, Ron, and his brothers Fred, George, and Percy all met in the Headmaster's office. Everyone but Harry still didn't know what was going on.

As they arrived, they found that Professors McGonagall and Sprout were both present.

"Ah good, you are all here now." Professor Dumbledore started. "As you are all minors, it would be very thoughtless of me to send you to Gringotts without some adult supervision. So your Heads of House will act as chaperones today, though I do believe the Weasley's parents and Madam Bones will be at Gringotts when you arrive. I have other matters that prevent me from going with you."

Harry growled within himself at Dumbledore's assumption that they would need to be chaperoned at Gringotts. But he did find it somewhat pleasing that he (Dumbledore) still wasn't welcome in the bank by the Goblins.

"But sir, how will we get there?" Percy asked.

Harry looked over at Fawkes, and before the Headmaster could answer, he let out a trill that drew everyone's attention to him. Lifting off his perch, he came to hover over the children and spread out his tail feathers.

"It would appear that Fawkes is willing to take you to the bank and back." The Headmaster said with a gleam in his eyes.

As soon as everyone reached up and grabbed hold of a tail feather, they were literally off in a flash.

Landing in an unoccupied corner in Gringotts, Harry thanked Fawkes for bringing them there, and asked him to return when they were finished.

Fawkes trilled his response, and flashed out of sight.

Everyone else was still in somewhat of a state of shock, as it was very rare for someone to travel by phoenix. Even Professor McGonagall had not had that privilege in all the years she had known Professor Dumbledore.

Getting everyone's attention, Harry led them to the main lobby of the bank. It didn't take long to find the rest of the group.

Madam Bones was indeed there with a small group of aurors around her. Being the head of an important department in the Ministry meant that most of the time she had at least one or two guards around her at all times. Harry was glad to see that one of the guards was in fact the retired auror, 'Mad-eye' Moody. The other was a young, tall, dark man with a bald head.

"Auntie!" Susan yelled as she ran across the lobby to meet her aunt. It may not have been the exact proper thing to do in a public place, but Susan really did love her aunt. It had been hard on her to go to Hogwarts as it was the first time she had been away from her aunt since she had moved in after her parents had been killed by Voldemort.

Madam Bones looked up when she heard Susan's voice and went to move towards her, but Mad-eye stepped in between the two of them

and pulled his wand, pointing it at Susan. As you can imagine, this brought Susan up short.

"Auror Moody! What do you think you are doing! That's my niece you're pulling your wand on!" Madam Bone exploded.

"I'm doing my job Amelia, and if you would think for just a minute you would realize that fact." Mad-eye growled back, never taking his magical eye off Susan.

"Normally you would be right Auror Moody," Harry stated as he moved forward, "But you forget two things: First, this is Gringotts, we are in fact under their jurisdiction. Second, wizards are not allowed to perform 'offensive' magic while here in the bank. As soon as you drew your wand, several armed goblins surround your group. If Susan were an imposter, she would not have lasted past her first curse, and if you had attacked Susan, I think Stonehand would have taken great pleasure in seeing just how good you really are."

Mad-eye's magical eye moved off Susan and noticed for the first time that they were in fact surrounded. Stonehand, the head of security at Gringotts, was grinning at Mad-eye, with his battle-axe at the ready. Putting away his wand, Mad-eye straightened up as best he could, and said, "Ah, yes, well, ah, good point there Potter. Always be aware of your situation, and remember to practice 'CONSTANT VIGILANCE'!"

Both groups of people had frozen in fear when they noticed the goblins around them. It wasn't until Harry laughed, and moved forward to greet Stonehand and Griphook that the others came out of their shock and moved together to greet each other.

Harry couldn't help but step back and watch as the two families met and mingled. Susan with her aunt... the only family she had left; and Ron with his parents, all of his brothers, and his one sister. He was swept away thinking of how his life could have been different if he still had his parents with him today. Would he have younger brothers or sisters? How close would they be? Where would they be living? Would he be loved?

Harry knew that Remus and Sirius both loved him, and he loved them in return, but somehow, it just wasn't the same.

Harry was brought out of his thoughts when Ron's little sister came up to him.

"Mis.. Mister Potter sir?"

Harry looked down at her with a start. He hadn't noticed her coming over to greet him.

"It's just Harry, please. I just want to be called Harry. You must be Ron's sister. I'm sorry I don't remember, but, what's your name again?" He asked.

"Oh! I'm Ginevra Molly Weasley." she said with a small curtsy, "but please, call me Ginny?"

"Ginny." Harry repeated to himself smiling. He liked that name. For her, it just felt right.

"I remember seeing you at the train station running along the platform as the Hogwarts Express was heading out. I remember thinking that it was a lucky family to have someone like you on the platform wishing them goodbye." Harry lowered his head and his voice a little and said, "I wish I would have had someone like that on the platform for me that day."

Harry was surprised at how lonely he felt at that moment. He missed having a family! He missed have siblings that he could play and fight and laugh with! He missed having a mother to hold him and hug him and let him know she cared. He knew that 'Ma' loved him, and tried to show that love when he was with her, but there was still something missing.

Sensing that something was wrong, Ginny gathered up her courage and took Harry by the hand. Harry looked up shocked at her action, but Ginny just smiled and pulled him towards her family.

As they approached, Ron noticed them holding hands.

"Oy! Potter! What do you think you're doing holding Ginny's hand like that?" He asked hotly.

"Oh, be quiet Ron! He's not holding my hand, I'm holding his!" Ginny said with her chin held up. She proceeded to take him over to the rest of the family and introduce Harry to them.

When Ginny introduced him to her mother, Molly reacted just the way she had hoped.

Reaching out, Molly took Harry in the type of hug that only a mother can give and just held him there.

"Oh you dear, dear boy. Thank you for all that you have done for us and our family and for being friends with Ron."

Harry just stood there soaking up the feeling of warmth and love that was coming from Mrs. Weasley.

Back in his subconscious mind, Harry could feel 'Ma' crying for joy that her little boy finally had someone that could show him what love felt like. It hurt her a little that she couldn't give that feeling to Harry, but she vowed to do everything in her power to make sure he didn't forget that moment.

The moment was broken when Griphook cleared his throat to get their attention.

"If the candidates and their families could please follow me, you escorts can wait here in the lobby."

Mad-eye again stepped forward. "How can we be sure they'll be safe?" He growled.

Stonehand stepped forward to meet Mad-eye and said, "I swear on my life and my blood they will be safe while at Gringotts. Happy now Auror Moody?" Stonehand was still had an evil grin on his face looking at Mad-eye.

After a few moments, Mad-eye said, "Ay, that will do, and I'll be hold'n ya to that Stonehand." Mad-eye grinning back.

Without further delay the large party of goblins and humans headed back to the maze of Gringotts hallways to a secure conference room.

For the first time since arriving at Gringotts the younger auror spoke.

"Auror Moody? Do you really think they'll be safe back there without an escort?"

"Ay, young Shacklebolt, when Stonehand swears on his life and his blood, ya know the only way any harm will come to 'um is if he is dead. And I don't see that happen'n ta'day, now let's go over to the others and visit while the rest are away." This was one of the few chances he'd had to get close to Min, with her at Hogwarts and him at the Ministry.

Of course, both Mad-eye and Professor McGonagall knew that as long as Harry was with the group, they would be safe.

Harry's group continued in somewhat of a confused state until they were brought to a conference room with large gold doors. As they opened the doors, Harry notices Ragnok, Goldridge, and several other members of the Goblin ruling council, and the Goblin equivalence of the Department of Mysteries.

When everyone was seated, Ragnok stood up and addressed the group. "Welcome honored guest." He started out.

The older people in the group were shocked to hear the leader of the Goblin world be so civil to a group of witches and wizards.

"It has come to our attention that the heir of the Hogwarts founders have been identified, and the heirlooms of the heirs have been reclaimed."

Madam Bones and Arthur Weasley gasped on hearing this news.

"Before we go any further, we need to have a magically binding oath from each of you that the information that you not disclose the identify of any of the other founder's heirs, or the rites that are to be administered here without the express permission of the heir."

Harry immediately gave his oath, and after talking about just what was meant by this oath, all the other families gave their oath as well.

"Splendid! Now to begin with, we must tell you that this information comes to us from the heir of Ravenclaw." As Ragnok pointed to Harry.

"Ravenclaw!" Ron yelled, "I thought you were the Lord of the House of Potter? If you're the heir of Ravenclaw, then why are you in Gryffindor?"

Ron's dad looked somewhat upset at his son's outburst.

"Remember Ron, I'll only be in Gryffindor for two years before I move on to another house." Harry replied.

"That is correct Master Weasley, Lord Potter is already the head of two houses, and soon he may be the head of a third, IF the heir's artifact accepts him" Goldridge added. Harry was still unsure how to get the book of Salazar to accept him.

"Let us bring forth the artifacts!" Ragnok declared.

The Goblin's from the Department of Mystery brought out three covered trays and set them on the table in front of the different families.

"First, the chalice of Hufflepuff! It is said that in times of need, this chalice will transform into a cornucopia of fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains, and will so manifest its self in the hand of the rightful heirs."

"Next, is the sword of Gryffindor! A noble blade that can only be used in the service and protection of others."

"And finally, the Book of Salazar. It is said to contain some of the darkest, most powerful magic and potions ever devised. In the hands of a dark wizard, this tome would be a very powerful weapon for evil, but, in the hands of a light, or gray wizard, this tome could help untold thousands by providing a clue as to how to undo a dark lords curse."

"Who would want to be the heir of Slytherin?" Again Ron stated loudly. "Everyone knows he was nothing but a dark wizard."

Both Arthur and Molly chided him for his outburst and threatened to silence him if he couldn't remain quite.

Ragnok smiled, showing his teeth for the first time – not a pleasant sight – and responded to Ron.

"Oh, that is quite alright Master Weasley, you see, had someone else not already claimed the heirship of Slytherin, your family could have made a claim on it also."

Ron sat there stunned, with his mouth open and his eyes bugging out of his head.

"Wh... what do you mean?" asked Ron shakily.

"Well in our research of your family genealogy, we found that your family line comes through a union of Godric Gryffindor, and Salazar Slytherin's oldest daughter Murisa." Ragnok stated.

"Don't you mean oldest sister?" Arthur Weasley asked hopefully.

"No indeed." Ragnok shook his head. "His oldest daughter." (A/N I can't remember what story I read this from, but it sounded too creepy not to use here.)

"It seem when Murisa entered Hogwarts, Godric was smitten by her. Before that time he and Salazar had been quite good friends, but the budding relationship between him and his daughter wore on that friendship."

"Godric was an honorable man, and did nothing to advance his feeling towards Murisa, but also did nothing to hide them as well. On the night of her graduation, Godric asked Salazar's permission to court and marry his daughter. Salazar is said to have been so angry that he attacked Godric right then and there, and would have probable killed him if Murisa hadn't sided with Godric and intervened in his behalf."

"Salazar was so mad at the 'rebellion' raised against him by his daughter, that he cursed their union until an heir of Slytherin could forgive them (Godric and Murisa) of their betrayal."

"What was the curse?" Molly Weasley asked.

"That until the curse was lifted, their children and their children's children throughout all generations if time would be red of hair, and

skin as if pox marked. That they would live nigh in poverty, and never prosper, and lastly that of all those born, only one lass would be born every seven generations."

"I think he hit the nail square on the head with that one." Ragnok concluded. Several of the other Goblins laughed.

"But now you see here young Master Weasley, there is one in this group that can break this curse – if they wish to (Looking at Harry), but I would be careful as to who I yell at because of their heritage, for you also share that heritage. Do you have any other questions?" Ragnok look at Ron coldly hoping the young wizard learned a lesson and could control his temper and prejudices better.

Ron, to his credit, blushed as red as his hair and slid so far down in his chair that all you could see of him was the top of his head. It didn't help matters that Ginny was trying to stifle a laugh an his expense.

"Now, first, we will start with the Bones family. Technically Susan is direct the heir because she is the only surviving child of the oldest Bones daughter and would normally be seen as the heir if they had claimed it prior to their death. We brought both of you here so that there may be an establish line of continuation should anything happen to either of you. Would you agree with this Madam Bones? Lady Bones?

Both Madam Bones and Susan looked at each other for a few moments in shock before turning back to Ragnok and shaking their heads said, "Yes".

"Excellent!" Ragnok said. "Now if you will each come up and take hold of one side of the chalice, each of you say together ' We claim our rights as heirs of the house of Hufflepuff'."

Susan and her aunt looked at each other for a few moments before both getting up and moving to standing on either side of the chalice of Hufflepuff. Slowly they reached forward with their hands to take hold of the handle on each side of the chalice. Again looking at each other for a few moments, they both nodded their heads, and, closing their eyes, said: " We claim our rights as heirs of the house of Hufflepuff!"

Immediately the room was filled with a wonderful light full of every color in the rainbow. When the light cleared, there, sitting on the table was a cornucopia filled to overflowing with fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains of every kind spilling out over the table.

"It would appear that the chalice has accepted you both as proper heirs. Lady Bones (speaking to Susan) I would suggest that since Madam Bones is your guardian, that you let her also be the public face of the heir of Hufflepuff. There are certain groups of people that may come after a founder heir, and your aunt is in a much better position to defend herself than you are. You would still have full access to Helga Hufflepuff's vault, but you would not have to worry about the social and political commitment that comes with this calling."

Susan and Madam Bones talked for several minutes before Susan again faced Ragnok and said, "We find your counsel and advice very wise. Please have the Power of Attorney papers drawn up to make it so". Susan bowed her head as a show of respect to Ragnok, who also bowed his head in return.

Turning himself to the Weasley family Ragnok addressed them.

"As we have already established, you are the direct descendants Godric Gryffindor and Muriel Slytherin."

Ron mumbled something to himself but fell quiet when the rest of the family turned and gave him a dirty look.

"Your family's heirloom is one of the most recognized items in all the wizarding world; The Sword of Gryffindor."

"Mr. Weasley, if you would please take the sword and scabbard off the table and go and stand on the North cardinal point in the room there in the middle of the room please? Thank you. Now Mrs. Weasley, will you please go and stand to the left of your husband? Yes, that's right. Now, each of the children starting with the oldest to youngest form a circle starting to the left of your mother. That would be Bill, Charlie, Percy, Fred, George, Ron and then Ginny."

"Come now Fred and George, there is a time for play and a time to be serious." The look Ragnok gave the two twins left little doubt in

anyones mind that this was not the time to joke around. Slowly, they switched places in he circle and waited for further instructions.

"Now," Ragnok continued, "Mr. Weasley, if you would bring the sword and scabbard into the center of the circle, everyone in the circle bring your right hand forward and support the scabbard. It is important that everyone is touching some part of the sword or the scabbard."

All the Weasley's brought their right hand forward and each grabbed the part of the scabbard that was closes to them.

"Now, with your left hand, rest it on the shoulder or arm of the person standing on your left. Miss. Ginny? It's alright if you can't reach your Dad's shoulder, just do the best you can. You can hold on to his side or back if you have to."

"Now Mr. Weasley, take the sword of Gryffindor by the hilt with your right hand and draw it out raise it over your head. Feel in your heart the words you need to say."

Everything was quiet for several minutes while Arthur Weasley closed his eyes and searched his soul for the right words.

Finally, Mr. Weasley opened his eyes, and looking up at the ceiling, said in a loud voice, "I, Arthur Septimus Weasley, of the ancient house of Weasley, claim my rights as heir of the house of Gryffindor for myself and my family for all time and throughout all eternity. So mote it be."

A great rushing sound was heard throughout the room as the air around the Weasley's began to shimmer and shine. A great column of light descended over the entire family and each member of the family shone in their own bright light.

Harry noticed that both Mr. and Mrs. Weasley glowed almost a pure white light, trimmed in gold.

Bill's light was a bit more gray, but still showed purity.

Charles' light had more of a blueish hue to it as if looking at the sky.

Percy 's light had elements of both green and red. It looked like Percy was quite 'discomforted' by some element of his light.

The twin's light showed playful signs of multiple colors around their head. Harry could just imagine a jesters hat fitted on top of their heads.

Ron's light was a darker green then that of Percy's. He looked as if he were in pain at the time, but no sound was heard, and he could not let go of either the scabbard, or Ginny on his left.

Looking at Ginny's light was a sight to behold. A bright golden light radiated from her. Harry could have sworn that he had a feeling of love an contentment coming from her.

After several minutes, the light subsided and several of the Weasley family took a sigh of relief, while Percy stumbled back from the circle, holding his head and Ron fell down where he stood.

"Bloody Hell!" he swore.

"Ronald Bilius Weasley! You will watch your language!" Molly Weasley said looking rather harshly at her youngest son.

"What did the different colors of light mean sir?" Harry asked Ragnok.

"Before I get to that, let me tell all present. The Sword of Gryffindor was patterned after another, older sword; The Sword of Roland." Ragnok began. Even though Harry had heard Sir Toppum and Drendal talk about this point, he had not realized just how much of the sword Godric had copied from his sword.

"As with the Sword of Roland, the Sword of Gryffindor can also judge the heart and intent of it's user. It would appear that, for the most part, it has accepted the Weasley clan as the heir's of Gryffindor. However, young masters Percy and Ronald have certain characteristics that it does not find acceptable.

For you, master Percy, you seem to hold an attitude of self-righteousness and jealousy, while you young master Ronald seem to be jealous of almost everyone, and everything. This will not due.

You will find training disks in the Gryffindor vault that can help you overcome these emotion.

Percy lowered his head and acknowledged Ragnok's comments and advice. Ron, on the other hand, looked up angrily at the Chief Goblin and said, "Oh, is that right you little.. Ohf.". Ron stopped when Ginny kicked him hard in the arse, while Fred on the other side of him reached down and put his hand over his mouth, while lifting him up with the other arm. He kept his hand over his mouth until he felt Ron go stiff as Bill quickly petrified him.

"Thanks bro! I didn't know how much longer I could have held him." Fred said.

"Yes, thank you Curse-breaker Weasley, your quick action prevented any further harm coming to your younger sibling." Ragnok replied. "Now, just lay him down there and return to the seats so we may continue with the meeting."

"But Honored Ragnok," Mr. Weasley began as he moved to his seat. "You have not told us what the rest of the colored lights mean."

"Yes Lord Gryffindor, you are correct." Ragnok replied. Mr. Weasley blushed and hung his head at being addressed by one of the most revered title in all the wizarding world.

"The white light that surrounded you and Lady Gryffindor show that you are proper wizards of light, and with the gold trim are in fact direct heirs of Gryffindor."

"William's bright gray light shows that, while he know a good deal of 'dark' magic, he only uses it to protect others and in the proper course of doing his work and is worthy to be a Lord of Gryffindor should the need arise."

"Charle would also be worthy of the title 'Lord Gryffindor', but in addition, seems to have an affinity of the air, and all things related to it. Now, if memory serves me correctly, weren't you a seeker at Hogwarts?"

"Yes!" Charle answered. "For Gryffindor house in fact! And now I work with Dragons in Romania!"

"Well, if I were you I would look in the Gryffindor vault for anything relating to being an Air Elemental! I think there is a good chance you may find something you can use down there."

"Now Percy we have already touched on. You too would be well advised to look at some of the training disks on overcoming your feeling of self-righteousness and jealousy."

Percy didn't even look up at Ragnok as he was talking to him, but just shook his head 'yes' while looking down at the floor with tears in his eyes.

As Ragnok turned his attention to the twins, a sly smile came across his face.

"It is said that Godric Gryffindor has quite the sense of humor. It would appear that you two have inherited that aspect of Lord Gryffindor character as the muggles say 'In Spades'. Frankly I pity any person, or group of people you take a mind to 'prank'."

For their part, the twins just looked at each other with a wide grin on both their mouths, and said, "All right!" and gave each other a high five.

Skippping Ron, who was still out cold on the floor, Ragnok turned to the youngest Weasley with a twinkle in his eye, and a 'pleasant' smile on his lips. "Ah, young Miss. Weasley." He began. "Possessing a heart of gold! The fairest of the fair. You have quite a young lady here Lord and Lady Gryffindor, truly worthy of her own prince!" Harry didn't notice Ragnok and the Weasley's all looking at him. He was too busy looking at how beautiful Ginny looked. He could still see the golden glow around her as he used his Mage sight for the first time in a long time.

Addressing the Weasleys again Ragnok continued, "It would appear that Ginny has all the gifts and talents belonging to a true Gryffindor. Guard her well, for she is truly worth her weight in gold. You will find may items in the Gryffindor vault that will be helpful in her training and development."

"That will bring us to the last of the potential heirs. Lord Potter? Are your ready to proceed?" Ragnok asked. "Lord Potter? Lord Potter! HARRY! Are you ready?"

Harry broke his gaze from Ginny and looked around the room before looking back at Ragnok.

"Wh... What was that you say?" Harry asked confused. Damn those hormones! When they hit a young man, they hit him hard!

Susan, her aunt, and the Weasley's (that were awake) just let out a little laugh at Harry's expense.

Harry blushed lightly as he turned his attention back to Ragnok. "Forgive me my Liege. I was temporarily distracted by the proclamation of Lord and Lady Gryffindor and their family." As he bowed his head in respect.

"Yes, so I noticed." Ragnok said with a glint in his eye. Madam Bones and Susan both tried to cover up a laugh.

"Now, if there are no other delays, Lord Potter, would you please take the Slytherin tome and open it as a sign of it's accepting you as the heir of Slytherin by conquest?"

"I will do my utmost my Liege, but I'm still not sure just how." Harry replied.

"I'm sure you'll find a way." Ragnok responded. " I should warn you that two of our unspeakable's have perished while examining this artifact. It would appear that the Asp that locks the book takes it's job of protecting it very seriously."

"I am sorry for you loss Ragnok, I will endeavor to be more careful."

Harry moved up to the table, taking care to only look at the book first, not touching anything.

As he stared hard at the strange marking around the book, he started to understand what was written on it: "This is the Property of Salazar Slytherin. All Gryffindor's keep their clammy hands to themselves." "Caution: all Gryffindor's have kooties! Keep your kootie to yourself." "Warning: to be opened only by Parselmouths – That means NOT YOU GODRIC!"

By this time Harry was laughing to himself when he saw some of the sayings around the book. The others were looking rather curious at the way Harry was acting now that he was exposed to the book. Suddenly, the great Asp that wrapped it's self around the book started hissing again.

'Are you my new master young one? Do you have the great gift?'

While the snake was saying this, Harry was moving his hand closer to the book so he could turn it to see what else Salazar had written on it. As soon as Harry's hand touched to book the Asp made it's move and sunk it's fangs deep into Harry's right hand. All the rest of the occupants in the room gasp in horror, knowing that this book had killed before, and was about to kill again.

As soon as Harry felt the pain his attention was drawn to the Asp. Without thinking Harry began to hiss back.

'OW! What do you think you are doing you bloody snake?'

Immediately the Asp released Harry's hand.

'Forgive me my Lord.' The snake began. 'I have been waiting for low these nine hundred year for another master to come an open me. Can you tell me, young master, how you came to speak the noble tongue?'

'The former heir of Slytherin came to my home when I was but a baby. He killed my parents, but was knocked out of his body when he tried to kill me.' Harry replied.

'Ah, I see. It would appear that this pretender heir does not understand what it truly means to be Slytherin. I am glad one of Rowena's blood beat him in single combat and can make the claim of being heir by conquest.'

'Yes, that's what I'm here to do today. But the goblins seem to think that I must be able to open this book without dieing. Will you accept me as the heir of Slytherin? And if so; How do I open you?'

The Asp on the book laughed for the first time in over nine hundred years as it came to understand Harry's situation. The people in the

room were filled with dread as the hissing sound filled the chamber that were coming from both Harry and the Book.

'Yes young master, I will accept you as the heir of Slytherin. But first tell me your name?'

'I am Harry James Potter, Son of James Harold Potter and Lily Evans Potter, Lord of the noble and ancient house of Potter and Lord of the most noble and ancient house of Ravenclaw.'

'You have answered well young master. My name is Wadjet, descended from the ancient gods of Egypt. I feel we have a connection in this from one of your animal forms I sense within you. Yes, you will be a very good master for me.'

'Now young master, I must bind myself with you and neutralize the posion that is currently flowing in your vains. After the binding, all you have to do is ask me to 'Open' in the noble tongue, and I will reveal myself to you.'

'Why did you posion me Wadjet?' Harry asked shakily, starting to feel the effects of the posion now.

'I am sorry my Lord, but I must protect the secrets that within the book. They contain life's work of my creator, and must be guarded at all cost. Now quickly, place your hand back on the tome so the binding may take place.'

Following Wadjet's advice, Harry once again placed his hand on the tome and watched as the great Asp sunk her fangs back into his flesh. He could feel the anti-venom being released throughout his body and immediately began feeling better. After Wadjet had taken some of his blood, she injected Harry with some of Salazar's blood to complete the blood bond, and to make Harry, if fact, the blood heir of Slytherin.

After the bonding had taken place, Harry again looked at the Asp, and while concentrating on her hissed 'Open'.

Everyone in the room gasped as they saw the asp uncoil it's self from around the tome disappear down the spine of the book. Then the book opened it's cover for the first time in almost a thousand years.

Looking back up at the other people and goblins in the room, Harry found their faces in various stages of shock, terror, and disbelief.

"What?" Harry asked intelligently, looking at the others in the room.

Mr. Weasley was the first to collect himself to the point that he could answer. "Well Harry... It's like this Harry... You were standing there looking at the book and then... you started to laugh and... it started to hiss at you... and, and you put your hand on it and then... You... You were bitten by the asp on the book... and we all remembered what Ragnok said about the other two who had died... but then... You, you started to hiss back at the book, and it hissed back at you and so forth, and then the asp bit you again and you hissed at it and the asp just uncoiled it's self from around the book and then the book... it just... opened!

Mr. Weasley and the others were still pale and speechless as Harry and the others just looked at one another and blinked their eyes.

Finally, Ragnok got to the point where he could talk too.

"Ah, Harry? How did you learn to speak parseltongue?"

"I don't honestly know Ragnok. All I know is that as I was looking at the symbols on the book I was able to tell what it was saying. Some of them are quite funny. I guess Salazar and Godric really did not get along very well back then."

"When the Wadjet bit me, of course, my attention was taken from the writings, to the snake on the cover and I said the first thing that came into my mind. I didn't realize I was speaking in Parseltongue."

"Wadjet told me that the secrets stored in this book must be guarded at all cost. That is the reason to the lethal bites. This book could only be opened by a parsalmouth, and now after the blood bonding, can only be opened by me. I would strongly recommend that you let all your workers know that."

"It shall be done Lord Slytherin." Ragnok stated solemnly.

Closing the book, Wadjet again came out from the spine of the book and wrapped herself around the tome to lock it. Harry again placed

his hand on the book as said, in parseltongue, "Shrink." Which the book did until it was small enough to fit in his robes inside pocket.

After several more minutes, Ragnok and the others settled down enough to where they could continue with the meeting. For this part, Ron was revived and brought back onto chairs.

"Now that each of you have claimed your birthright, there are other rites that must be undertaken. These will occur in the Vaults of the Founders. Each of you will go with one of these specially to your respective vault and go inside. There you will find two clocks, one for the inside time, and one for the outside date and time."

Ron and Susan both looked at Harry when they heard about the time dilation spell in each of the vaults. Could this be just like Chamber 8 in Harry's trunk? They turned their attention back to the Head Goblin.

"For each hour that passes in the outside world, one week will seem to pass within the vault. This is so each of you can inventory the vault, and find those things that will help you in fulfilling your role of a founders heir."

Each of the different families headed out a different door, got into a cart, and were rocketed down the tracks deep under the bowels of the bank. After about 5 minutes Harry notices that his, and two other carts are heading for the same point on the tracks. Bracing himself for a tremendous crash, Harry was shocked when all three cars stopped just before colliding. Harry found himself with his eyes closed, his teeth clinched, and his arm braced for impact. He could hear the screams from the Bones and Weasley women, and most of the Weasley men (except the twins, who thought the goblins should pay for a ride like that).

Getting out of their carts shakily, each family was directed to a Vault of the Founders. After placing their right hand on the door and identifying themselves, each group was admitted into their own vault.

Harry looked at his surroundings and wished he had brought Remus or Sirius with him. Before him was a vast cavern, with cauldrons and potions of every kind. Rare ingredients that would bring a fortune on the market stored in stasis spells that had lasted a thousand years.

Harry found a portrait of Salazar Slytherin prominently displayed in between the potions, and the stasis cabinets as if keeping an eye over his possessions.

"Hello sir. My name is Harry Potter." Harry said politely.

The portrait just ignored him.

"I said, HELLO SIR! MY NAME IS HARRY POTTER!" a little bit louder.

Still nothing.

Harry was getting frustrated and was about to walk away when he hear laughing from within him robe pocket. Stopping, Harry took the tome of Slytherin and placed it on a nearby table. After trying to get it to expand using a normal charm, Harry concentrated on the asp on the front of the book and hissed 'Expand'.

The tome immediately returned to it's regular size. Wadjet was still moving around the cover of the book, laughing at Harry.

"He will not respond to you unless you use the noble language!"

"What? What are you talking about? What noble language?" Harry asked.

"Parsaltongue of course young master. In his later years he only spoke in parsaltongue so of course any heir of his would know how to speak parsaltongue also." Wadjet replied.

Harry thought for a few minutes and ask 'Ma' what Wadjet was talking about.

'Well Harry, it would appear that when you are concentrating on the snake, or the markings on the book, you naturally slip into speaking parsaltongue. It has been quite fascinating for me to set back here and 'hear' both sides of the conversation. Both what you are trying to say and how it sounds in parsaltongue, and also what Wadjet is saying to you. How you hear the hissing sound, and also the English version too. I am trying to keep a record of the different sound and their English equivalent for further study. In the mean time, you need

to take a little bit of time to feel the difference when you are speaking English, and when you are speaking parseltongue.'

'Now go and greet Lord Slytherin. I want to what he has to say, it should be most fascinating'.

After Harry had spoken with 'Ma', he did take a few minutes to review. At first he didn't know what he was looking for, but then he noticed that whenever he looked at the Book of Salazar, or the snake, his speech center moved closer to 'Tom Riddle's' core. That was how he could speak parseltongue.

Remembering this fact, Harry again approached Lord Slytherin's portrait and said, "Hello sir, my name is Harry Potter. It is a pleasure to meet you."

Lord Slytherin's image opened his eyes and looked over Harry with a look like he has just smelled something very bad.

"So, you are my heir? Not much to look at are you? A 'Potter' you say? How can that be? The Potters were always do gooders like Godric. And, according to Wadjet, you are already the heir of Ravenclaw."

"Tell me... 'heir' what year is it? How old are you? And how did you come to be my heir as well?"

Harry was a little 'put out' by Salazar's attitude, but both 'Ma' and Drendal encouraged him to show respect as he (Harry) was probable the first person this portrait had spoken to in many, many years.

Harry took a few calming breaths and started at the beginning, explaining that it was now the year of our Lord 1991, and that he was a first year student at Hogwarts. He told Salazar about what happened to his family and how he 'defeated' Lord Voldemort in single combat.

He told of his childhood in the home of his Aunt and Uncle, and how he found out about his heritage when he was eight years old.

Harry told him about the wizarding world's situation – as best as he could, and how things were in the muggle world in general.

Salazar's portrait listened attentively, asking questions for clarification where needed. He was very disappointed in what Voldemort had done, how corrupt and inept the Ministry of Magic had become, and was even more upset in how manipulative the Headmaster was.

Over the next 'seven days' that Harry was in flex time, he learned what it truly meant to be Slytherin. He was show potions and charms that would correct any physical defect and limitation he may currently have.

Harry took some of these things, but decided against correcting his eyes yet as they were still changing, and fixing them now may just mess things up later.

At the end of the seven days, Harry had just scratched the surface of the things that Salazar had to teach him, so he found another mult-chambered trunk, and packed as many books, potions, ingredients as he could, and of course Salazar's portrait. After it was packed, he shrunk the trunk, and put it in his robe pocket.

He came out of his vault at the same time all the other families came out. He could tell that they must have had an experience similar to his. There was very little talking as the families got back into their carts and headed back to the surface. Once there, the groups were once again brought into the large conference room with Ragnok and the others.

"Welcome back everyone. I hope your time in the Founder's Vaults were well spent. You are welcome to come back here any time to return to your vaults and learn more of your heritage. Now there is just one more item of business we need to take care of, and that is to remove the block from your magical core – for those students that still have them."

For a moment there was stunned silents in the room, then both Madam Bones and Mrs. Weasley exploded demanding to know who would have put a block on their niece's / children's core.

Ragnok smiled at the reaction of the two matrons, and explained what Harry had disclosed to them.

After the other Weasley children were 'cured', Madam Bones indicated that she would be going to the Ministry of Magic and St. Mungo's to see that the practice was stopped.

For her part, Mrs. Weasley went to the Daily Prophet to make sure all of the parents in wizarding world were aware of what had been done to their children, and to demand an investigation as to who was responsible for this act.

The children attending Hogwarts were taken back to the main lobby, where they went over to a secluded corner of the bank. Harry called for Fawkes, and he and everyone else were taken back to school.

The next few weeks seemed to be filled with concern and confusion throughout the wizarding world in Great Britain.

Parents of young witches and wizards were being informed by the Ministry that persons, under seventeen, had to have a 'check-up' before continuing their education. The Ministry was 'requesting' the parents grant permission of each youth to be tested at either St. Mungo's, Hogwarts, or if the children were home schooled, a healer would come to visit them... along with an Auror.

It was explained in the notice that there would be no potions administered to the children, just two, or possibly three quick spells. It was stressed that it was mandatory of those who had been born at St. Mungo's in the past seventeen years to complete this 'check-up'.

Harry had given the Headmaster and Professor Flitwick permission to disclose these three spells with the healers who would have to take a magical vow to never disclose the spells to any other persons. Then they would be involved in removing the blocks from off the children's core. They could even take credit for their development – Harry didn't care. "You can always tell the Minister you always had a way of reversing the process." Harry told Professor Dumbledore.

It wasn't surprising that most of the opposition to the testing was from the pure-bloods that had supported Voldemort the last time he was in power. The Malfoy's, Parkinson's, Nott's, and Goyle's were some of the more notable names on a petition sent directly to the Minister of Magic demanding an explanation for these tests, and also demanding to be present when the tests were administered.

The Minister explained that the spells were simply healing spells, but that since they were still new, they were distributed to the healers on a need-to-know basis only, and that the actual incantations would not be disclosed at this time. In fact, he himself didn't know what the Headmaster and Professor Flitwick were looking for.

In the end, it was agreed that a parent or guardian could accompany their children to the test.

The children would sit in front of a screen to conceal the identity of the person performing the incantation. There would also be a screen over the top of the child sitting in the chair with a hole cut in it so that the healer could see the top of the person's head. A silence charm would be on the screen so that the parents and the child could not hear the spells being cast, or see the results of the 'magnitudo de magica' (size of magic) spell. There would also be an obscuring spell cast over the opening so that if the person sitting on the chair tried to see who was standing behind them, they could not.

In years to come, the 'magnitudo de magica' (size of magic) spell would become one of the standard spells used whenever anyone came into a healing center, just like taking your height, weight, and the color of spots on your tongue.

After most of the issues had been worked out between the Ministry, St. Mungo's, and Madam Pomfrey at Hogwarts, the testing was scheduled. Most of the testing would occur over the weekends for the next several weeks so as to not interfere with the regular class schedules. Those students whose parents wished to attend the testing were scheduled first to insure that their questions and concerns would be alleviated.

Draco and his group were among the first to be tested at Hogwarts.

In order to keep up appearances, Harry and his friends were also in one of the first groups.

The Malfoy's made a big display coming to Hogwarts by dressing in their family crested robes. Lucius Malfoy held his head high, with his nose slightly up in the air so that he could look down on everyone he passed. In his right hand, his custom made cane with the silver snake head on it with the emerald eyes. Few people still alive knew that's where he kept his elm wand with the dragon heart-string core

in. On his right was his lovely and spoiled wife Narcissa, still looking as if there was something smelly under her nose. On his left, Draco, looking like a spoiled prince.

Most of the others families that signed the petition were with the Malfoys. They were to be present when their children were also tested. Harry also wanted to keep a close eye on Draco and the rest of the Slytherin house.

As the first group of people approached the infirmary, Professor Dumbledore was there to greet them. "Ah Lucius and Narcissa. How good to see you again, and in such fine health."

"Yes Headmaster, isn't it?" Lucius snarled. "Why don't you drop all your pretending and tell us what is really going on?"

"I'm sorry you feel that this is a ruse Lucius. I assure you this is something that could be quite serious. It has come to our attention that the majority of children born over the past seventeen years may have somehow had a block put on their magical core, thus preventing them performing to the best of their ability." Dumbledore answered clinically.

"WHAT! This is an outrage! I demand to know who is responsible for this travesty and have them punished to the fullest extent of the law! Then I want them sent to Azkaban and given the Dementor's Kiss!" Lucius Malfoy yelled in false outrage. He knew what was going on moments after Madam Bones returned to the Ministry. Several other parents joined in his mock anger.

"That won't be necessary Lucius. The individuals responsible are no longer at St. Mungo's."

(Strictly speaking, since Dumbledore and Fudge were responsible for this mess and since they were not at St. Mungo's, the Professor spoke the truth – just barely).

"It is hoped that the spell we will be doing today will identify any block on your son, and then remove it. It is hoped that over the next few years his core will continue to expand to it's proper size before reaching his seventeenth birthday and his final magical maturation."

"Now the procedure will proceed as follow," Professor Dumbledore stated to all those present. He knew that all he would have to do is explain it one time, and the Hogwarts rumor mill would take care of the rest.

"Each family or individual will be brought into the infirmary one at a time. Once inside, you will find a chair in front of a screen. The student will sit on the chair, and the healer behind the screen will cast a series of spells on you. The first spell establishes a baseline rate as to the current power of the student. The next spell will check to see if a block or binding is present on the students magical core. If it is, a third spell will be used to remove the blockage. Depending on the power of the person that put the block on in the first place, it may take a few moments to remove the block."

"The student will then be checked again to see how their magical core is doing, and if any other blocks are present. This procedure will be repeated until there are no more blocks on the student. A final power rating will be taken, and the student and their parents will be excused while the next student is called. Are there any questions that I can answer?" Professor Dumbledore asked.

"Will we be given our final power level after the procedure is complete?" Asked Draco.

"I am afraid while you are not of age you will not be able to given that information, however, should your parents or guardians ask, the information would be given to them. Then it would be up to them to share that information with you. But I must caution you that regardless of your power level, there is always the likeliness of someone having a higher number. This is something that can cause a great deal of jealousy among friends."

"What rubbish." Draco snared almost as well as his father. "Everyone knows how powerful the Malfoy / Black lines are. I'm sure I'll have one of the highest numbers in the whole school, not to mention year."

"Well, if we are through discussing things out here, Mr. and Mrs. Malfoy? If you would please escort young Mr. Malfoy in to the infirmary?" Professor Dumbledore gestured as he opened the door.

Harry had found the whole scene quite amusing. He expected that the Malfoys had made sure there was no 'bind' or 'block' on him as a child. But it still seemed that he wasn't that powerful of a wizard. Harry thought it might be because Draco had everything done for him, he had no reason to work his core while growing up.

In less than five minutes Draco exited the infirmary at a high rate of speed, his cheeks flushing bright red.

"What was your power rating Draco?" Pansy asked.

"None of your business!" Draco yelled without looking back, stomping his way down to the dungeons and the Slytherin home room.

Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy tried to salvage some small shred of decency by walking slowly past the crowd of people towards the doors leading out of Hogwarts. "Headmaster." Lucius acknowledged as he passed tipping his head slightly – being sure he didn't make eye contact with any other person in the queue.

Most of the others being tested were thrilled with their results. As soon as those students found out that they could know their power rating – but only with their parent's permission, wrote home to have them send a permission slip to have the power rating released to the student.

Over the next few weeks everyone was excited to find out what his or her power rating was. They were thrilled to see how everyone was progressing.

Neville was now up to 1,380, Ron had progressed to a 920, Hermione was at 1,150, but everyone was surprised with Susan's increase. She had been at 345 after Harry had taken the binding off her core, she was now at a solid 1,265! Of course, the healers and staff at Hogwarts were unable to determine Harry's power rating due to the amulet his father had placed on him when he was a baby.

Everyone was happy for the others success... except Ron.

"How come everybody's so far ahead of me now? It's just not fair!"

"Ron, remember we spend almost everyday in Harry's trunk in the Room of Requirements for the equivalent of three days!" Hermione said. "If you want to improve, you have to work for it everyday, not just once in a while or only make a half hearted effort when you are there."

After the testing had been completed, some of the Ravenclaw students got together and came up with a table of the average power level for each grade level:

First year: 460 (They disregard Harry's group's rating since it was so far outside the 'norm')

Second year: 525

Third year: 675

Fourth year: 750

Fifth year: 870

Sixth year: 990

Seventh year: 1,372 – (This included those student who had already gone through their magical maturation)

To review the current power rating for a witch or wizard:

A Low Power Wizard started at: 101

A Normal Power Wizard started at: 501

A High Power Wizard started at: 1,501

A Low Sorcerer started at: 3,001

A Normal Sorcerer started at: 5,001

A Grand Sorcerer started at: 7,501

A Mage started at: 10,501

An Arch Mage is any witch or wizard with a power rating greater then 15,001

The few classes after the student 'check-up' as it was being called, quite interesting. Many students had to learn how to control their magic all over again in Charms, Transfigurations, and Defense against the Dark Arts. Harry felt a small degree of satisfaction knowing he had brought about a little bit of change in the lives of his fellow students, and that hopefully, they would use this increased power for the benefit of their fellows.

Professor Dumbledore had made an announcement to the school that with the blocks taken off their cores, they could work on getting the cores to their proper size by using magic as often as possible.

He explained that their magic was just like any other muscle. In order for it to grow, it had to be exercised. He did warn the students that just like any other muscle, it was not always good to work the magic until you were exhausted. The core needed time to recover after a hard 'workout'. Of course the students could always go to Madame Pomfrey for a restorative draft if they needed it.

Almost all the students were casting stronger charms, shield, and spells and were having an easier time with their transfiguration problems than before. Not only that, but the increase in power, also increased their own self-confidence.

That is for everyone except – Draco Malfoy.

It would appear that Harry was right in his assessment. Draco never had a block put on his core, but also, he never exercised his magical core while he was home. He just had his house elves bring him everything he wanted.

Draco was falling further and further behind his classmates in the three classes that required power from your magical core. The only class where he really excelled was in potions, and that was with a lot of 'encouragement' from the instructor, Professor Snape.

One day after class, Draco stayed behind to ask for help from his Head of House.

"Mr. Malfoy, don't you have some other place to be right now? I would suggest you get there, NOW." Professor Snape snarled as Draco approached his desk.

Trying to still act in control, and superior, Draco snarled back, "Sir, there is a matter of House pride that I feel must be addressed immediately."

Professor Snape raised an eye brow and looked up at Draco.

"And what matter might that be Mr. Malfoy? Your hair dye potion run out?"

Draco flushed at the mention of his scalp condition.

"No!... NO!" He said much quieter. "It about... the, the, results of the... check-up." By the end of the sentence Snape's could hardly hear what Draco was saying.

"Excuse me, what was that again?" Professor Snape asked with an evil gleam in his eyes.

Draco's face colored even more as he as he lifted his head and yelled into his Head of Houses' face. "THE CHECK-UP RESULTS! THOSE STUPID, BLOODY CHECK-UP RESULTS!"

"Ah, and what seems to be the problem with these check-up results? It seems to me that most of the results in Slytherin House are at par, or above the average for each year. In fact, to the best of my knowledge, the only person not reporting or bragging about his power rating would be... you. I wonder why that would be? Especially with all that boasting about how powerful the great Malfoy / Black heir would be."

"Now Mr. Malfoy, what exactly is the problem here? You said it was a matter of House pride. Are you sure you phrased that right? Wouldn't this be more of a matter of 'personal' pride?"

Severus Snape was enjoying humiliating his godson too much just now. It wasn't often that he could get something on Lucius, but this could play out to be something BIG! Well, at least embarrassing to the Malfoy family, and he wasn't about to let it pass.

Draco finally felt defeated, as he lowered his head and dropped his shoulders.

"Uncle Severus, I need your help... as, as your godson."

"Very well Draco," Severus' attitude changing as quickly as his roll of Professor to Godfather. "Are you going to tell me the results of the check-up?"

With his head held down Draco muttered something.

"What was that?" Severus yelled back. "Remember who you are boy and who you represent! Head up! Shoulders back! Look me straight in the eye and tell me the result of your check-up!"

Draco jumped when his Godfather yelled at him, but he quickly stood up straight, held his head high, with his shoulders back, looking once again like a pampered, spoiled prince.

"My initial and final scores were the same, 395. No block was found on my core."

"Ah. I see now. You are well below the average for even a first year student then aren't you? Yes, I see your problem now." Professor Snape said looking thoughtful. "There are, of course potions and rituals that can be used to increase your power. Most of the more 'effective' ones are forbidden by the Ministry, so I would have you wait until winter break until we use some of them."

"In the mean time, there are three thing we can do."

"What? What are they? I'll do ANYTHING so as to not be the laughing stock of Hogwarts!" Draco said with a great degree of emotion in his voice.

"I am glad you feel that way Draco, because it is going to require you to actually do something you've never had to do in your life... WORK!" Snape said with a certain amount of glee in his voice. He know that his pampered godson had never had to do a bit of work all the time growing up. That he was use to having someone else do anything he was expected to do.

The reaction in Draco's face was the same type of shock and horror you would see in someone else's face when they heard the word 'Voldemort'.

Ignoring Draco's response, Professor Snape continued. "I will work with you every morning at 6:00..."

"6:00!" Draco shouted. He was about to say something else before his godfather cut him off at the knees.

"Quiet you insolent brat!" Professor Snape yelled at him. "For too long you have not been carrying your own weight when it comes to doing things. Performing magic is something you have to do for yourself. You can't have Crabbe or Goyle do it for you! Do you not think that the Dark Lord himself hasn't had to work and sacrifice to

obtain the awesome power he held? If you want great power, you must do the same."

"Now, as I was saying. You will meet with me each morning at 6:00 here in the potions lab. I will supervise you working through the basic spells you are currently learning, and will instruct you in some of the more advanced spells that are no longer a part of the Hogwarts curriculum, and some of my own design as well. The results of these sessions will be to exercise your core and allow it to grow."

"In conjunction with this we will be using two different amulets. The first amulet, that you WILL be wearing during these training sessions, is designed to restrict the amount of magic a person can use. This will require you to work harder to get the same results. Frankly, I will be quite surprised if you can do even the easiest of spells with this amulet on."

"After these sessions I will be giving you a strong restorative draft and a second amulet. This amulet will amplify your magic by a third. You are to wear it always and keep it well hidden. If you are found in possession of this amulet, you could well be expelled from Hogwarts and have your wand snapped! Do you understand the importance of this item Draco?"

"Yes, Godfather, I do." Answered Draco quietly. "Th... Th... Thank you." Those were probable the two hardest words Draco had ever said. He had never said them to another individual, and he knew that now he would be indebted to his Godfather for a long time to come.

"Don't thank me yet boy, wait until you see what I have planned for you in the morning."

Draco had never worked so hard in his life, and anytime he would whine, or complain to his Godfather about the amount of work he was required to do, he would find himself on the end of a very low powered Cruciatus curse. Of course, you couldn't tell Draco it was a low powered curse. If you were to ask him, he would have said that Professor Snape was powering the curse with all of his negative emotions.

He would show up at 6:00 AM sharp – if he didn't want further punishment from his Godfather.

Professor Snape sat up dummies and targets much as were in Harry's training room. Draco would work on casting his spells at the dummies while they were standing still, and then when he thought he knew the spell well enough, he would use the target traps to test both strength and accuracy.

Professor Snape made Draco re-learn ALL his spell and pushed him to do them perfectly before going to the next one. Draco soon learned that he was to do EXACTLY what his Godfather said, or he would be punished.

After several weeks Draco noticed that his spell casting was improving greatly. He was feeling more powerful, and with that feeling came confidence. He again began to strut around in the common room and hallways of Hogwarts.

He took great pride in the fact that, not only was he learn how to do his standard spells correctly, but the fact that his Godfather, Professor Snape, had entrusted only HIM with spells no one else in the school knew. Overall, thing were looking up for the young Slytherin.

End of Chapter.

A/N:

29-OCT-2008

Thank you all for waiting for this latest chapter. I have made several additions to this and the previous chapters. It looks like there will be four or five more chapters before the end of this story. I do not know if there will be a follow up, meaning that we will never see what Harry can do with his staff, or what will become of his feelings for Ginny. Probable just as well. It seems that almost anyone and everyone has written a Harry / Ginny story. (Still much better then any slash).

Things are still not back to normal in my house. My wife's MS has progressed to what is call secondary progressive. She has had to

give up driving and can no longer do many of the house-hold chores around the house or outside in her flower garden.

I have just had my knee repaired and am spending about half my time back at work – until I just feel too sick (or sore) to continue.

I will try to get the next chapter out in the next four to six weeks. My outline is in need of a great deal of updating.

Again I thank you for your continual support. I hope you appreciate the effort that goes into writing a story. If you think it's easy, just try it – that's what got me started. You each have your own ideas as to how you wish things should be, write an outline and start flushing out some ideas. We all benefit from your efforts.

See ya soon.

rdgale2000

The Next chapter: Room of Knowledge

Chapter 24 - Chamber of Secrets

After their trip to Gringotts, Harry's schedule seemed to fall in to a normal routine: Classes, Study, time in chamber 8, quidditch practice, and trouble with Professors Quirrell and Snape.

Harry had taken the time to meet with Mr. Weasley to remove the family curse placed on him as heir of Gryffindor by Salazar Slytherin, even though none of the older Weasley boys looked like they had any hopes of getting married at any time soon.

One of the things Harry had learned about during his time Salazar's portrait while he was at Gringotts, was regarding a 'guardian' Salazar had left there to protect the school in his absents.

The basilisk was considered the 'King of Snakes'. It could kill with a stare and had the deadliest venom known to man. Salazar explained that just before leaving Hogwarts, he had placed the guardian in his personal chamber located under the school and that this guardian was to remain in stasis until it was needed to defend the school from direct attack, or was summoned by a parselmouth. Harry told Salazar that he had already been told about the basilisk by his house elves, but it was nice to have additional information regarding the 'King of Snakes' before he met it.

Salazar told Harry where the chamber was and how to get to it. He also told Harry about the chamber it's self and how he could use it to study his tome.

The first weekend after returning from Gringotts, after receiving their inheritance, Harry slipped away from the rest of his friends telling them that he had something very important to do.

Making his way down to an abandon girl's restroom on the second floor, Harry entered, and found the emblem of a snake on one of the faucets there. Just as Harry was going to speak, he was surprised when he heard someone talk behind him.

"You're not supposed to be here are you?"

Harry jumped back, pulling his wand out and pointing it at the new voice.

Above Harry was the ghost of a young girl in a Hogwarts uniform with large glasses on her face.

"Who are you?" asked Harry shakily.

"No need to be so rude." The specter said. "My name is Myrtle. I was killed in this bathroom 49 years ago."

Harry put his wand away so he wouldn't look threatening. "Oh, Hello Myrtle, it's nice to meet you... sorry about you being dead. Can you tell me how it happened?" Harry asked.

"Well, since you ask so nicely. Olive Hornby had been teasing me about my appearance and I had come in here for a good cry. While I was in here, I heard someone else enter and walk over to the sinks just as you just did. Then I heard this boy 'hiss' something, and then the sound of something moving around. By the time I looked back, the boy was gone, and everything looked normal.

"I went back to my stall to cry and think how rude that boy had been coming in here without so much as a 'by your leave'. A little while later I heard something move again, and looked out of my stall sooner. All I saw were two big red eyes, and the next thing I knew, I was dead! Now, wasn't that rude?"

"Yes, very thoughtless." said Harry. "Did you happen to see who the boy was?"

To his surprise, the ghost took exception to his question and screamed at him. "Just typical of a boy! Not caring for me or my feelings at all!" With that, Myrtle let out a cry, and disappeared down one of the toilets.

"I don't think I will ever understand girls." Harry said to himself.

Returning back to the faucet, Harry found the one with an image of a snake on it. Remembering what Salazar has said, he concentrated on the image, and hissed out 'Open'. Much to his surprise and delight, the furniture moved to reveal a tunnel leading down below the school.

'Down.' Harry spoke again in parseltongue, and a platform appeared at the mouth of the opening. As he stepped on the platform, it

proceeded to move down the hole. As Harry cleared the opening, the sinks moved back into place leaving him in darkness.

"Lumos," Harry said holding his wand. He noticed in the light of the wand all the slime and grunge that was on the pipe. 'It's a good thing I didn't have to slide down this' Harry thought to himself.

As he reached the bottom of the pipe, he noticed several things. One, there was what looked like a skin shed by a very large snake.

'This isn't right,' Harry thought. 'The basilisk was supposed to be in stasis.'

'Ma' chose this time to remind Harry of something the ghost had said. 'Harry, remember the description of how that young girl died? She said that all she saw were a pair of red eyes, and then she was dead. That sounds just like how a basilisk would kill someone, if they looked into their eyes.'

'Thanks 'Ma',' Harry thought, 'I was hoping that Sal and Myrtle were making that part up about a basilisk.'

'No, I'm afraid not son' Came 'Ma's reply.

'That means that the basilisk has already been woken up. Do you think there will be some danger there? I mean, I'm sure it hasn't eaten in a long time. I'd hate to be a breakfast snack for it.'

'Don't worry son. I'm sure whoever opened up the chamber last time put the basilisk back into stasis.' 'Ma' replied.

'Ya, if he had the chance.' Harry thought.

Continuing down the hallway, Harry came to the inner chamber door.

'Open', he said again in parseltongue.

A large green snake came out of the hinge of the door and weaved its way around the door frame unlocking all the locks as it passed. As it returned to the hinge, the inner door opened.

Carefully walking into Salazar's Chamber, Harry hissed 'Lights' and immediately the chamber was filled with light coming from above the pliers of great snakes that lined the walls.

As he reached the front of the chamber, Harry noticed the great bust of Salazar Slytherin, just as he had been told it would be. 'Boy, I guess Salazar really thought a lot about himself didn't he?' Harry thought to himself.

Remembering what the portrait of Salazar had told him, Harry raised his hand and said 'Speak to me Salazar, greatest of the Hogwarts four!'

Just as expected the mouth of Salazar's bust opened wide.

Now, for the next part of his task, Harry had to think of some way of getting rid of a thousand year old snake. Well, I guess it wouldn't hurt to talk to it first.

'Guardian of Hogwarts! Come forth! Thy master calls thee!' (Might as well put in a few old English words when talking to a thousand year old snake.)

From deep within the opening in Salazar's bust came an angry voice of a very powerful beast.

'Who dare call Guardian of Hogwarts? If thou art not my master truly, I will surly tear you asunder!' Came an angry reply.

'I am Harry James Potter, heir of Slytherin by conquest and also of blood. Hood thine eyes great guardian and let us speak.' Harry stated as boldly as he could.

'Potter? If this is one of Godric's tricks I will take great pleasure in ripping thee asunder before returning thy body to the house of fools!' came the reply.

Harry could hear something coming quickly out of the opening. He stood as confidently as he could. Drendal had told Harry that he must show no weakness before the great guardian if he were to command it, and have it do his bidding.

Harry thought it best if he called his sword to him so that the snake could see that he was ready to give battle if that is what it wanted.

As the basilisk appeared in the open of Salazar's mouth, Harry looked in its general direction, but made sure he avoided looking at its eyes.

'Ah, I see that thou art not entirely a foolish little man. Thou comest to me with an enchanted sword... but not of Gryffindor's... it is... much older. Interesting. I sense that thou art indeed the heir of Slytherin even more so than that little welp that called upon me last time. Fear not, little one, I will not hurt thee. Mine eyes are hooded so that ye may look upon me and I upon thee without any ill effects. What is thy bidding my master?'

Harry took a moment to calm himself and dismiss Drendal before addressing the snake again.

'Come, let us sit together and speak of the past and thy task. I bring a portrait of thy first true master to also talk with thee and explain how things have changed over the last thousand years.'

The basilisk came down to the main chamber and slithered in front of Harry.

'Hast thou truly brought my first master? It has been many years since I have last seen him. I must admit that I long to see his person again. What doest thou desire to do know my lord?' the great snake asked.

Harry brought out the portrait of Slytherin, and over the next few hours Harry, Sal, and the Basilisk talked as to what has happened over the last few hundred years, and who it was that called it forth the last time.

Harry heard about Tom Riddle and what he had had him do.

'I am not proud of my actions my lord, but my last pretend master had told me that the castle was under attack by those called 'mud-bloods', those who came not from magical families.'

'Please do not call they 'mud-bloods', they are muggle-born.' Harry stated

'As you wish my lord, what would you have me do now, my lord?' the Basilisk asked.

Harry hadn't really thought that far ahead, so he asked the great snake, 'What wouldst thou have me do?'

The guardian was somewhat taken by surprise that his lord would ask what he wanted to do.

'It matters not, my lord, what I want. I am thy servant and will do as I am commanded, though I am sorry for having wronged the young maid. I long to be with my first master again if he will have me.' Sal looked at the great snake and nodded his head 'yes'.

Harry thought about it for a few moments before addressing the guardian again. Salazar was both pleased to see his old friend, and sadden by the loneliness he could feel in the basilisk's voice. Maybe he had been careless to leave such a creature down here for so long, unsupervised and without guidance.

Harry broke the silence by talking to the basilisk again. 'I am sorry guardian, but in order for me to be a proper lord, I must be aware of the wants and needs of my subjects. I value thee, and the service thou hast rendered over this last millennia and I do want to know, what wouldst thou like to do now?'

The great snake took a few moments to look at Harry and consider the words he had said. Then, bowing his head he looked at Harry and spoke.

'My lord, unlike my foe the phoenix, I was not meant to be immortal. I feel I am no longer a part of this world. It has changed too much since I began this sojourn on this earth. It is my wish to move on to the next great adventure. Unfortunately, I can not, of myself, leave this sphere, and would ask thee, my liege, to release me from this existence.'

Harry was somewhat shocked at the request the basilisk had made from him and asked, 'Is there not some other way great guardian? Doest thou not wish to travel or see what is outside this chamber?'

'No my lord. There is nothing left for me here.' The great snake said. 'I have no family, or desire to travel about. There is no Manor or Estate where I could go to live out my days. I am too dangerous to be allowed to roam freely for surly there would be many who would parish if I were to but gaze upon them. No, it is better that I go now. I am saddened that I was used for ill by one who was unworthy of the title of Lord of Slytherin. I fear that if I were to remain, it may happen again. Also by leaving now I may find some redemption of spirit for the harm that I have done.'

Desiring to honor the basilisk request, he asked, 'How would I do this for thee, my friend?'

'There are but two ways that will guarantee my demise my liege. The first is to hear a rooster's crow... a most painful exit. The second way is found at the base of my skull. There is a spot under my scales where the brain and spine are joined. One quick thrust with thy sword at this connection will cause an instant, painless death.' With that the great snake lowered his head to show Harry where the spot on his neck was.

'Art thou sure that this is what thy desire? I do not wish thee any harm.' Harry said.

Harry could feel the light hearted response of the great snake. 'Thou hast asked my lord, yea, this is my desire. I do not wish to stay here in this existence any longer.'

Harry was now sad that he had asked what the basilisk wanted. He did not want to kill such a great and old snake. It was Drendal that came to his rescue.

'My lord if I might suggest? The morals and desires of this great beast are of a different age then now. It views its service and usefulness over. It feels that it is no longer needed here. He also feels a certain amount of sorrow for taking the life of one that was not a threat to the school and in being used by a pretend heir. As a part of its 'redemption', it feels it must exchange his life for the life of the maiden as he has said. He truly means what he says. I hope this makes sense to thee my lord.'

'Yes, now that you explain that to me and made it clear to me that this is truly his desire, it does make sense, though it does make me sad to see such a great snake die.'

'GREAT SNAKE!' 'Ma' exclaimed. 'That's a bloody basilisk for goodness sake! You can't have something like that running around the school full of children!'

'Ma!' Harry said, 'This basilisk was set down here to be a guardian for the school, not to attack the students! As Lord of Slytherin I am responsible for it as well as the rest of Salazar's possessions.'

Harry returned his attention back to the basilisk and asked, 'Wouldst thou like to talk to the maiden thou didst harm? Perchance to ask her forgiveness as well? '

The basilisk response was both humble and heavy.

'Yea, young master, it would be a great relief if I could gain her forgiveness and understanding. But how canst thou call her back from the land of the dead? Art thou a greater wizard than Merlin?'

"No great guardian, I am not. But the maid has not crossed over to the next great adventure and is a ghost here in the castle. Talk with thy first master a little longer whilst I go and fetch the maiden." With that, Harry was out of the chamber and back up the pipe.

"Myrtle? Myrtle! Are you here?" Harry asked. "I have something I think you will want to see and hear"

Out of the central chamber, Harry heard a commotion.

"Oh, it's you again." Myrtle said disinterestedly. "What could you possibly have that I would be interested in?"

"Myrtle, I'm sorry I wasn't more caring or feeling about how you died the last time we met, but I promise, that has all changed. I have just found something out in Salazar Slytherin's secret chamber – it's underneath the sink here, and I think it will interest you."

"And what could that possibly be?" Myrtle asked as she folded her arms in front of her.

"I know how you died." Harry said quietly, "and I think I know how to bring closure to your soul."

For a moment, it looked like Myrtle even paler than she was before.

"Please Myrtle! Give me a chance to prove myself to you." Harry pleaded.

Nervously, Myrtle nodded her head and asked, "What do you want me to do?"

"Just stay close to me and I promise nothing and no one will hurt you."

As Myrtle moved closer to Harry, he turned to the sinks and said 'open' again.

Myrtle was shocked and a little a scared to hear parseltongue, but stayed close to Harry.

'Down' he said as he began their descent through the pipe.

Harry took out his wand again and said "Lumos," illuminating their way down the pipe.

Harry felt a chill go through his body as Myrtle moved even closer to him and tried to grab his arm. He looked over at Myrtle and tried to give her an understanding look, doing his best as to not show how cold he was.

As they reached the bottom, Myrtle wasn't sure if she wanted to continue. Harry turned to her and as seriously as an eleven year-old boy could said, "Myrtle, I promise on my magic and as heir of Ravenclaw and Slytherin that no harm will come to you while you are with me."

There was a sudden flash of light to show that a magical oath had been made.

Myrtle was shocked and amazed to know that the young man in front of her was willing to make such a serious oath just for her. That act alone made her feel more secure and at ease than she had felt for as long as she could remember.

"Thank you Harry, no ones ever cared for me enough to do something like that. But I'm still scared. Can't you tell me what it is you found down here?"

Harry was afraid she would disappear on him again if he told her, so he just smiled. He had been glad that she didn't seem to notice the snake skin that had been shed in the middle of the path. So he simple turned to her and said "We're almost at the inner chamber. I have a portrait of Salazar Slytherin who told me that when he was here he left a 'guardian' to help protect the school. It would appear that another student found out about the chamber and the guardian, and used it to terrify the school. It is unfortunate that as a result of that student's action, you died. Now that I have met the guardian, he has expressed remorse for causing your death, and wishes to ask your forgiveness before he move on to the next great adventure."

Harry noticed that Myrtle stopped and looked at Harry with a shocked expression on her face. For a moment Harry thought she was going to start whaling again and fly away.

"Yo...You know who m...my killer is?" she asked.

"Yes Myrtle, I do. It was a young man named Tom Riddle. He tricked the guardian into thinking that the school was under attack from muggle-born witches and wizards."

"Tommy Riddle? Bu... But he wasn't a pure-blood. Why would he hate muggle-born?"

"I'm not totally sure about that Myrtle I just think he was mad at everyone at that time. Here we are at the inner chamber. Please Myrtle, promise me you will stay with me and not disappear. This is very important for everyone."

Myrtle shock her head 'yes' and moved closer to Harry.

'Open.' Harry said as the inner chamber door opened for him.

Harry looked in and found that the basilisk was hiding, but that Sal's portrait was still out where he had left it. Moving down into the chamber, Harry brought Myrtle to the front of Sal's portrait.

"Sal, this is Myrtle. Myrtle, this is Salazar Slytherin, one of the original founders of Hogwarts. I think it is best since Myrtle does not speak parseltongue that we would all speak in English while in her presents." Sal looked a little put out, but shook his head agreeing to the situation.

"As you wish my heir." He said with a bow. Turning to Myrtle, he said, "My lady Myrtle, it pains me greatly that the guardian that I set to guard the school and the students has been used for ill and was the cause of your early demise. You have my heart felt sorrow and apology." With that he bowed to Myrtle.

To say that Myrtle was stunned would have been an understatement – A founder of Hogwarts apologizing to her! She was beside herself.

"Of course Master Slytherin. You have nothing to apologize for."

"Ah, but I do fair maiden. For it was I who left the basilisk here in the first place to protect the students from invaders. I did not take proper care to insure it would not be used to harm those that it charged to protect. Please forgive me.

This is what Harry had been afraid of – just coming out and telling Myrtle about the Basilisk.

"A basilisk?" Myrtle shot up to the top of the chamber. "YOU LEFT A BASILISK HERE TO PROTECT THE STUDENTS! ARE YOU MAD?" Myrtle screamed. Sal had the common dignity to lower his head in shame.

As Myrtle was continuing to fly around the top of the chamber yelling about the basilisk and how foolish it was to have such a dangerous animal anywhere near children, Sal turned to Harry and said in a low voice: "You did not tell her about the guardian?"

Harry looked back at the portrait and replied: "Oh I told her about the guardian. I just hadn't got around to telling her the part about the guardian being a thousand year old basilisk. Thanks for bringing that part up by the way."

"My pleasure my heir. Now please, quickly try to calm the young maiden down so we can conclude this unpleasant business."

Harry immediately turned back to Myrtle and said, "Myrtle! Remember my promise to you! Nothing here will harm you."

"HARM ME! HOW COULD IT HARM ME ANY FURTHER? IT KILLED ME FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!"

"Yes Myrtle, I know that. Remember what I said about the young boy Riddle coming down here and finding out about the guardian? He was the one that was in control of the Basilisk when it found you. Now, after Master Slytherin and I have talked to him, he knows that he was used for evil and has asked us to give him the chance to ask your forgiveness before he is sent on to the next great adventure." Harry was speaking very quickly, with a degree of pleading in his voice. He did not want this opportunity to pass by if Myrtle and the Basilisk could find some form of closure from this exchange.

Myrtle started to float back down towards Harry. "What do you mean he wants to go on to the 'next great adventure'?"

She continued to move closer to Harry as the seriousness of this act became apparent to Harry. He answered her with a heavy heart.

"He knows that what he did was wrong and wishes to answer for his crime according as honor demands: A life for a life."

Myrtle was back next to Harry looking shocked at what he was saying. "Are you sure he can't hurt me again?" She asked.

"I'm sure." Harry replied. "His eyes are hooded, and they will not... do what every they would do to a ghost. I just wish there were somehow for you to hear the guardian directly, and not through Master Slytherin or me. That way, you could be sure as to what the basilisk was saying."

"Ah, but young master there is just a spell for that. Point your wand to the maiden and say 'Serpentis Exaudio' in parseltongue and she will be able to understand anything that is said in parseltongue." Salazar said.

Harry looked from the portrait of Salazar to Myrtle with a questioned look on his face. Myrtle looked back at Harry and nodded her head 'yes'.

Taking out his wand, Harry pointed it to Myrtle and said, 'Serpetis Exaudio' in parseltongue as Sal had instructed. Switching to parseltongue, Harry said, 'Myrtle, can you understand me?'

Myrtle shook her head yes and said "Yes, I can. It's as if you're speaking normally, but I can hear the hissing sound too."

'Myrtle, come close to me now. I am going to call the guardian out.' Harry said.

Myrtle for her part got as close to Harry as she could. As she pressed up against his back, he again felt a cold shiver run down his spine, but for Myrtle's sake, he did not react.

Holding his hand up, Drendal appeared in his hand. Speaking in a loud voice Harry spoke: 'Great guardian, hood thine eyes and come hither to make thy redress. The maiden thou hast harmed is here! Guardian COME FORTH!'

With that, the shadows in the back of the chamber seemed to stir, and before long, all could see the sixty foot basilisk drawing near to them. If possible, Myrtle drew closer to Harry making him feel even colder.

When the basilisk was within ten meters from the group, he spoke: 'Young maiden, I had been placed here to guard and protect the students and teachers of Hogwarts for nigh on one thousand years. In all that time I have not been called to action save once. I do not make excuse for my actions'.

'I was approached by a young lad who knew the noble tongue. He said he school was under attack from the 'mud-bloods' as he called them. And that if they were not driven from the school, Hogwarts would be destroyed.'

'I hurried with him to the pipe that exited near thine abode. When I came out of the pipe I saw thee looking at us through thine door. It was then that I un-hooded mine eyes and thou fell dead. It was as this was taking place that I realized something was amiss. I realized that I felt no evil or ill intent from you, but from the one I had called master. For as soon as I gazed upon thee, my young 'master' did

that which is most dark and unholy. He used thy death to rip his soul in half and store half in a book which he had upon his person.'

"O bloody hell!" Salazar's portrait said softly.

'As I turned to attack this pretend master, he was able to bind mine eyes and control my mind to where I could do him no harm, but he could not get me to do any more of his evil work for him. Finally he returned me to this chamber and placed me back into stasis until he could find a way to bring me back under his control. He never returned I am glad to say, but for me and for thee that damage had been done. I am sorry young maiden, most honestly and truly. I did not mean thee harm, but yet it has happened and now honor demands that I forfeit my life for taking yours. Please, forgive me.'

The entire chamber was deadly silent except for the sound of a young girls cry. As the basilisk spoke Myrtle was drawn away from Harry and closer to the great snake. By the end of the story, Myrtle was next to the snake softly crying.

"I forgive you my friend. You are not to blame for my death. It's Riddle who tricked you into thinking the school was under attack. I just happened to be the first person you found. And I was the only one you let Riddle use you to kill. When you saw he was lying to you, you stopped! You tried to do what is right! I can now say after forty nine years I do not fault you for my death. The fault is clearly Riddle's that I am dead. You do not have to kill yourself to atone for someone else's sins. Please... stay."

After Harry had made sure the Guardian has heard Myrtle's words, he was hopeful that the great basilisk would agree with her and not ask him to send him on to the next great adventure.

The basilisk thought on what Myrtle had said for several minutes before he gave his reply.

'I thank thee young maiden for thy kind words and gift of forgiveness. However, there is more than one reason why I must move on. There is no place for me here. I am too dangerous to all that are in this world. I can not take the chance for someone else using me for ill again. I was never meant to live a millennia. My time has passed. I wish to move on to the next great adventure. This is my final request.

I will not be turned from it.' The basilisk lowered his head and waited for Harry to deliver the death blow.

Harry had now moved next to the basilisk. Using the scales of the great snake, he climbed to the top of its head. Once there, the basilisk lifted the scale that exposed the kill point. Harry looked down at Myrtle and said, 'You know you don't have to watch this if you do not want to.'

Myrtle nodded her head and said, "I understand, but right now I want to be with my friend during his last moments on earth."

Harry was having a battle of his own in his mind. He had never taken the life of a creature that was not in battle or in protecting someone else's life. 'Young master,' Drendal said, 'this is the way of the great guardian. You cannot impose your sense of morality on his. What he is doing, for him, seem just and fair. To do otherwise would be a disgrace and he would feel dishonored for the remainder of his days. He may continue to serve you, but it would be with remorse and without total commitment. Please Harry, do what must be done.'

'He's right Harry,' 'Ma' continued. 'You have many things that you will need to do in the future that you will not 'want' to do, but they will need to be done, and many times you are the only one who can do them. This is one of those times sweetheart. I know you don't feel like doing it, but it is something that must be done, and only you can do it.'

'That doesn't make me feel any better you know 'Ma'.' Harry said.

'I know sweetheart, but this is part of growing up. No one said it would be easy.'

'Ay, young master, to be a Paladin one must be willing to do that which is right, not easy at all time and in all places, despite our personal feelings.'

Harry finally resigned himself to the task that was before him now. Looking down at the 'Kill Point' he said: 'Great Guardian, know that thou art leaving this life having faithfully and honorably serving your master and liege to the end.' With that, Harry called his sword, Drendal, and struck quickly at the 'Kill Point'. Immediately he felt the basilisk rise up slightly, and then, falling down, let out one last great

breath. After that – nothing. The basilisk lay perfectly still. His eyes remained closed, his tongue was hanging out a little to the side of its mouth, but there was no movement from the great snake that Harry could see, hear or feel. Slowly he drew his sword out and looked down at the great beast he had just sent to the next great adventure.

For what seemed like an eternity, Harry remained standing there, perfectly still. He did not remember how or when he returned to the ground again. What brought him out of his stupor was the feeling of someone placing their warm arms around him in a loving embrace. He looked up almost expecting to see his 'Ma', but to his surprise, Myrtle was there holding him with what looked like a tear in her eyes, a soft golden glow surrounding her.

"Thank you Harry. I know that could not have been easy for you, but you did the right thing for both the basilisk and for me. I can now cross over to the next great adventure myself since I now know the circumstances surrounding my death. I have been waiting to be able to do that for a long time now."

"I know this is not the proper time to mention this, but almost all parts of a basilisk are useful as potion supplies, weapons, or protection. I'm sure the Guardian would have liked to have been of uses to his master even after his death."

Harry looked up at Myrtle with a hurt expression on his face. 'How could anyone even think of something like that at a time like this?' was his thought. After a moment he nodded his head to her to acknowledge that he had heard her, then he lowered his eyes again, feeling the tears start to burn as they tried to escape.

"I have to be going now Harry." Myrtle said, "I'll make sure all your family know how good you are doing, and Harry?" Harry looked up again. "Thank you."

With that she leaned forward and gave him a kind, tender kiss on his lips as she faded from view.

Again Harry stood there for several minutes trying to relish the feeling of that kiss on his lips.

Coming around to the reality of the present, and the sight of a dead basilisk in the Chamber of Secrets, Harry almost felt sick. He knew

that he had to get back to chamber eight in his trunk so that he could spend time centering himself and coming to grips with the task that he had been called upon to do. Shrinking Salazar's portrait, Harry put it in his pocket to take with him to the chamber also. It was obvious that there was quite a lot more that he still had to understand regarding being an heir of a founder.

"Sassy!" He called.

Instantly his first magical friend was there. "Yes Harry, what do you need... WHOA!" Sassy jumped behind Harry when she saw the large basilisk laying there in the chamber.

"Har.. Harry? D... Do you kn...know there is a bi... big snake next to you?" Sassy stuttered.

"Yes Sassy, I'm well aware of the big snake that is next to me. I just got through killing it!" Harry answered a little too sharp then what was needed at the time.

"I'm sorry Sassy. I shouldn't be taking this out on you. Sorry."

"Sassy, I need you to check with some of the other elves and see if there is anyone who knows how to harvest the different parts from a basilisk. I want everything saved and preserved that can be. Then dispose of the rest of the body properly please. I'm going to be in chamber eight, and do not wish to be disturbed."

With that, Harry took up Sal's portrait, walked past Sassy and into his trunk straight to chamber eight.

Over the course of the next eight hours – ten days trunk time. Harry spent time talking to Salazar's portrait and with 'Ma' and Drendal regarding the action that he had been required to take. At the end of this time, Harry felt a little better regarding what he had done, but he was also very weak, since he had taken no water or food with him into the chamber.

As he exited the chamber, Sassy had a light dinner of soup and bread along with a few potions to help him get his strength back. Harry thanked Sassy for the meal and potions and then retired to his bed in the 'Potter Manor' in his trunk to get some proper sleep. He

knew he would still have to return to the Gryffindor common area before curfew.

End of chapter 24.

A/N

Sorry for the long delay. This chapter was very hard to write by it's self, but having real life get in the way of things just added to the confusion.

For those who have not visited my profile page lately, let me point out a few things that have happened in the interval.

I became a Grandpa for the first time with the birth of my granddaughter! She was born on her father's birthday, keeping up a three generation tradition.

Work being more demanding

Wife's MS is now secondary progressive.

The next chapter should be about Harry finding Rowena Ravenclaw's personal chamber.

Thank you for your time and patience in reading this story.

Rdgale2000

Chapter 25 Room of Knowledge

By the time Harry made it back to the Gryffindor Common room it was shortly before curfew.

"Just where have you been all day?" Hermione asked with her hands on her hips. "I've been looking for you. Don't you know that the weekend is a perfect time to catch up on any incomplete homework and get further ahead in our studies?"

What she was really upset at was that Harry had disappeared and had taken his trunk with him. Without it, she couldn't go to chamber 8 and spend even more time studying and learning more about magic.

Harry however, was still not in the mood to talk about a lot of things.

"Hermione, I'm sorry if you lost some time for studying, but something came up that I just had to take care of, and no, I can't tell you what it was. Let's just say that now the girls can use the bathroom on the second floor again and not be bothered. Now if you'll excuse me, I'm tired, I'm hungry, I'm upset and I really don't want to talk about it. All I want to do right now is go upstairs and go to bed!"

Hermione was taken back by how 'short' Harry had been with her and his attitude in general. In her mind, she was thinking 'What could be more important than studying and homework?'

"Well I guess that means no time in the chamber then," Neville whispered to Hermione. "I guess we better get back to Hufflepuff before curfew. Goodnight Hermione." With that, Neville took Susan and returned to their own common room.

After Neville and Susan had left, Hermione sat down next to Ron and asked, "I wonder what has him all worked up? Ron, do have any idea?"

Ron looked up at her with an almost blank stare. He wasn't really paying any attention to his copy of 'Quidditch through the Ages' that was laying in his lap. He was thinking back to his own experience at the bank where he and Percy had been singled out from the rest of his family as being the least worthy to be called 'Gryffindor'.

"I wouldn't know for sure, but I bet it had something to do with what he found out about his heritage at Gringotts. Now if you'll excuse me, I think I'll be off to bed too." With that Ron stood up and went up to his room.

Entering the first years boy's dormitory shortly after Harry, Ron decided to try to talk to Harry.

"Harry? Ya got a moment?" Ron asked.

"Sure Ron, what do you want?" Harry answered coldly. He was still upset at the action he had to take, and fed up with Ron's attitude regarding him as the Heir of Slytherin.

Ron sat down on his bed with his eyes looking down at the floor, holding his hands together like he didn't know what else to do with them.

"I... I just wanted to say that I've been thick headed and I'm sorry for what I said and did while I was at Gringotts. I'm starting to see..." Ron took a deep breath, and Harry realized just how difficult this was for Ron to say out loud.

"I'm starting to see just how far I am from what a true Gryffindor should be."

"I had no idea just how close the founders were when they established the school, and what it really meant to be Gryffindor, or Slytherin. I'm sorry."

Ron was still looking at his feet while he was making his apology. That made it a little hard to hear, but Harry could make out what he was trying to say.

"Thanks Ron, I know what it's like when you are faced with a difficult choice and have to change the way you look at things. I know it's not always pleasant to have to change and grow up, but no one said life would be easy. Are you going to be okay?"

"Ya, I think so." Ron replied. "I still have a lot of those learning disks things to go through. It really isn't very pleasant to see just how petty

and jealous I had become, but I think I'll make it. Maybe not all at once, but eventually."

"Good for you Ron, I'm proud of you. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to get some rest."

With that, Harry closed his curtains around his bed, charmed them so he would not be disturbed, and slipped into a restless night's sleep.

He visited with Durendal and his 'Ma' at Potter in the Mind trying to understand the old views of honor and morality. He asked questions about the duties of a Knight and Paladin. What would happen if he killed an innocent person? Would he be able to kill any person – even Voldemort?

Harry woke up Sunday morning with just as many or more questions as he had the night before.

Not feeling ready or able to do his regular training, Harry went down to the Quidditch fields to fly around for a while. Flying always helped him relax, and he felt the tension of the past few days wash over him.

After a few minutes in the air, a sudden flash of flame next to him made Harry jump before he looked and saw that Fawkes had appeared next to him.

'What troubles you young one? I can sense you are upset over something.'

"Fawkes! Are you trying to make me fall off my broom?" Harry yelled as he got his broom under control.

Fawkes sounded like he was laughing as he sang some notes that lighten Harry's heart.

'I am sorry young one. I did not mean to scare or frighten you. You looked like you could use a... what do you call it? A listening ear?'

"Sorry Fawkes. I've just had a lot on my mind these last few days. You probably already knew I'm now also the Heir of Slytherin by conquest?"

Fawkes just nodded his head.

"Well along with that, I learned that Salazar left a guardian here to 'protect' school."

Harry didn't know how else to tell Fawkes about the great snake, so he just came out and said it.

"It was a thousand year old basilisk Fawkes." Harry stated solemnly.

'Yes, I know of Master Slytherin's pet. Tell me young one, does he still live?'

Harry was surprised by Fawkes' comment.

"No Fawkes, he does not. He felt remorse for being used by Tom Riddle almost 50 years ago and his part in the muggle-born witch Myrtle's death. He felt that for honor to be satisfied, and for any hope of forgiveness in the next life, He would have to forfeit his own. As his new master, it fell upon me to carry out the deed."

"I did get Myrtle to talk to him before the end, and she offered the basilisk her forgiveness for his part in her death. Now that Myrtle has found closure as to how she died, she has also now crossed over."

Fawkes flew up into the sky, singing a joyful tune and doing loop-the-loops above Harry in the air.

'You have done several great things young one whether you know it or not.'

"You'll excuse me if I don't feel like celebrating." Harry said sadly.

'Please do not treat yourself too harshly young one. You have aided in the crossover of the young maiden, and in so doing you have made it possible for the great king of snakes to seek redemption as he moves on to the next great adventure in the best possible way. You have seen to it the great king of snakes can not be used for ill again and all here at Hogwarts, both adult and child are that much safer.'

'I was not bonded to the Headmaster or Hogwarts when the former heir of Slytherin released the basilisk on the students, but I did hear

my former bonded talk and think much about the problem that a basilisk such as that would present to him and the wizarding community at large.'

'I knew of Salazar's chamber under the school, but was unable to do anything regarding the king of snakes while he slept.'

'Now you have solved the problem and all are better for it. You must know young one that the great snake was not meant to live a thousand years? At most, they would live three score and ten (A/N 70 Years) before going on to the next great adventure.'

'Come young one, let us fly.' Fawkes invited.

"Ah, Fawkes, what do you think I'm doing on my broom?"

'You are sitting. It is the broom that is flying. You need to fly young one – come, let us fly.'

Harry now understood what Fawkes was talking about. Of his four forms, two were meant to fly; the Hippogriff, and the Bennu. The Bennu was his fire form, a close relative of the phoenix. Harry needed to practice a lot in his Bennu form if he was to get the best use out of it and who better to train him than Fawkes.

Rather than return to the ground and change into his form, Harry thought he would try something different. Pointing his broom straight up into the sky, he accelerated until he was high enough that if anyone watching him from the ground, could not see him. Then, with a mental command, shrank his broom and placed it in his robe. By this time he had completed this task, his upward momentum was exhausted and he started to return to earth.

Remembering everything he had learned about his Bennu, Harry changed during free-fall and felt just what Fawkes meant when he said 'Come – let us fly'.

Harry's Bennu looked a great deal like a Heron you would see in the lakes and woodlands with long spindle legs, a long beak, and two plume feathers on the top of his head.

Harry's back and wings were red, tipped with gold while his breast remained white. His lightning bolt scar was on his forehead between his two plume feathers and of course – his eyes were green.

Harry had not tried any of his animagus forms since he had come to Hogwarts. He didn't realize just how much he missed being in one of his forms.

With a trill and a swoop Harry returned to where Fawkes was waiting for him.

'Yes young one, that is much better. Now come, follow me.'

With that, Fawkes took off with Harry close behind. Harry was unaware of where they were going or how long they had been flying. He was concentrating on keeping up with Fawkes and doing everything he did.

When Fawkes swooped, Harry swooped.

When Fawkes climbed, Harry climbed.

Moreover, when Fawkes 'flame traveled'... Harry 'flame traveled' as well without thinking about it.

After sometime, Fawkes stopped in a tree that was laden with much fruit and started to eat. Harry landed under the tree beneath Fawkes and started to eat the fruit that had fallen to the ground. His long spindle legs did not make for resting in trees very easily.

'You have done well young one,' Fawkes started. 'Had you ever flame traveled before?'

'No,' Harry thought. 'I just followed you and it seemed easy. I even knew where you were going and how to get there. It almost seemed ... natural.'

'That is very good young one, you are paying attention to yourself and your surrounding. Now tell me young one, do you know where Hogwarts is?'

Harry stopped eating for a moment and closed his eyes. Thinking of where Hogwarts might be, he got an mental image of Hogwarts. He knew exactly where it was and what it would take to get there.

'Yes!' Harry replied. 'I know exactly where Hogwarts is!'

'Very good, now, do you know where Number 4 Privet Drive is?'

Harry was less then pleased to think about his old home, but he closed his eyes and found that yes, he did know where Number 4 Privet Drive was. And the Ministry of Magic; and Lupin Manor, and any other place he could think of.

Fawkes then had him concentrate on individuals: Professors Dumbledore and McGonagall, Ron, Neville, Remus, Sirius, Susan, Hermione, even Ginny. Harry could find them all.

'That is very good young one. Now you will have to practice this skill so that it does not fall into disuse.'

'We have been away from Hogwarts long enough young one, we must return home now. But we must be careful that you remain unobserved. I would suggest the back side of the broom shed, outside the Gryffindor locker room.' Fawkes rose off the branch and looking over his shoulder looked at Harry and said, 'Race ya!' and disappeared in a flash of flame.

Harry was shocked by Fawkes actions and 'flamed-out' back to Hogwarts as quickly as possible.

Arriving at the broom shed, Harry changed back into his human form, and found Fawkes already there 'laughing' to himself and asking what took Harry so long.

"Very funny Fawkes. I wonder if it is possible to prank a Phoenix? Maybe I'll wait until your burning day and find out."

'You wouldn't dare!' Fawkes thought.

"No, your right, I wouldn't dare. But I wouldn't put anything past those Weasley twins." Harry said with a smirk.

Harry felt quite a bit better after his morning with Fawkes. He was able to put some of his actions into perspective with relation to the whole of Hogwarts and the wizarding world in general and the individuals it affected directly. He still had strong feelings about what he had done, but at least now, his actions weren't holding him down.

He planned to use chamber 7 – the 'Open Space' area to practice all his animagi forms.

It was just before lunch when Fawkes and Harry got back, so he hurried up to the dorm room and got cleaned up, changed, and came downstairs to go to the Great Hall.

Ron and Hermione saw Harry coming back down into the common room and asked if he were heading down to lunch.

"Yes Ron, thanks for asking. I didn't expect you to wait for me though. Who knows, maybe today is the day they run out of food in the kitchen?" Harry joked.

"Na, I talked to Wood, you know, the House quidditch captain and keeper? He said Hogwarts always has plenty of food. I guess you were right after all; the twins were just pulling my leg. Now hurry up, we don't want to miss out on too much now do we?"

Hermione for her part just looked back and forth between the two boys. Shaking her head, she said, "It seems the only things you take seriously are food and quidditch Ron." Then looking back at Harry said, "And where have you been all morning? You do realize you missed breakfast don't you?"

Harry just smiled and said, "Love you too Hermione, now, let's get down to Lunch."

Ron and Harry left out the portal while Hermione just stood in the middle of the common room with a shocked expression on her face.

After lunch, Harry got with the other four students, and took his trunk up to the room of requirements. He apologized to his friends, and told them that he would have his trunk in 'The Room' from 7:00 to 9:00 each night for the rest of the week, so they could come and use it for studies or practice during that times.

As the other four students get ready for study time in chamber eight, Harry excuses himself telling them that he need to write a letter to his godfather and uncle.

"Now are you sure you'll be alright all by yourselves for the next five days in compressed time?" Harry asks with a smirk on his lips. "I wouldn't want you boys and girls doing anything you shouldn't be doing now."

"No Harry, we'll be fine. If Neville gets out of line, I'm sure Susan can take care of him." Hermione replied.

"It's not Neville I'd be worried about if I were you Hermione." Harry shot back.

Hermione blushed as she thought about Ron. Susan and Neville covered their mouths to keep from laughing. Ron, on the other hand missed the whole meaning for several seconds before he too blushed and looking at Harry said, "Oy, What's that about now?"

"Nothing Ron just pulling your chain. I'm going to leave Sassy here to help you and make sure you don't get into any trouble now, okay?"

"Okay..." they all replied.

"I come back as quick as I can, but at least you won't miss dinner this evening if I don't get back before."

"Sassy!" Harry called.

"Yes Harry? Is there something you need?"

"No, I just want you to get chamber 8 ready for these four for a five day stay please? Make sure they are studying and not doing anything they shouldn't do okay? Even if you have to stun Ron or Hermione."

Ron and Hermione did not look amused.

"Sure Harry, where will you be?"

"I need to write my godfather and uncle about some of the things that have happened in the last few days. I hope it doesn't take all four hours that they will be in the chamber, but I don't know just how much time it will take me."

"Sure Harry, you can count on me." Sassy responded.

After the others had entered into chamber 8, and the time dilation spell was engaged, Harry entered into chamber 7 where he looked over the open spaces there full of trees and fields. Remembering what Fawkes had said about using his Bennu form, Harry decided to use it today to visit Sirius and Remus. With a thought, Harry changed back to his fire animagus, and 'flamed' to Lupin Manor.

Sirius and Remus had just finished a late lunch when they were interrupted by the arrival of a Bennu.

Remus had seen in this form before, but had never seen him travel by flame. Sirius wasn't aware that Harry was an animagus yet, and so, when he saw the bird appear, he was expecting Fawkes – not this Heron standing in the kitchen.

"Whoa, Remus! Who's this! I didn't know of any other bird that could flame in other than Fawkes!"

Harry took that time to change back into himself, and said, "Well hello to you too Sirius. It's good to see you getting so well adjusted. Have you tried out your dog run yet?"

With that, Sirius fainted.

"Do you really think that was necessary Harry? And when did you learn to arrive like that?" Remus asked.

"Of course it was necessary Uncle Remus. I wouldn't be the son of a marauder and the godson of another one if I didn't. Now as to your second question, Fawkes found me and could tell I had a form that was similar to him. He showed me how to use it."

"Okay. I think it's great you are letting Fawkes help you learn how to use your form. Now, what do you want to do with Sirius?"

"Well, obviously you haven't told him about my forms, so why don't we go down to the runes and ritual room and use the time dilation feature so I can spend some time with the both of you. There have been some things happen in the last few days that I could use both your help with."

"I think that's a great idea. We do have some catching up to do now don't we? Let me revive Sirius and we can get started."

A quick rennervate later and Sirius was back up looking at Remus.

"Boy, I thought I was over my stay at Azkaban, but I thought I just saw a bird flame in here and turn into Harry. Just what did you put in that tea Remus?" Sirius asked as he slowly got up.

"Well I guess that means you are getting better then Uncle Sirius." Harry said as he stepped out from behind Remus.

Sirius sat back down on the floor looking at Harry.

"Harry! What are you doing here? Did Fawkes bring you here? Did you see a stork like bird here just a minute ago?"

"Whoa, slow down Uncle, you're starting to sound like one of my classmates, Hermione, with all those questions. And in one breath too!" Harry laughed. "There have been a few things that have happened over the last few days that I need your advice and help with."

"Oh Harry, to think that you need my help with regards to girls so soon! I didn't even notice girls until I was in my third year! James would be so proud!" Sirius got up and pinched Harry's cheek.

"What? NO! Not that!" Harry blushed. "I doubt I'll ever find someone that would put up with me!" 'Though I wouldn't mind getting to know Miss. Weasley better.'

"No, there are some thing that happened at school and Gringotts that I need to talk to you about."

"Oh. Well what do you need help with then?" Sirius asked.

"Let's go down to the runes and ritual room so I can have a bit more time to talk to you." Harry answered.

"Runes and ritual room? Why would we want to go down there?" Sirius asked.

"Oh come on Sirius, you'll love it." Remus said. "Ty!"

"Yes, Master Lupin what can I do for you today? Ah, Master Harry! Welcome home! Just here for a short visit I take it?"

"Yes Ty, I will need to get back to Hogwarts as soon as I'm through meeting with my uncle and godfather here. Could you get the runes and ritual room set up for five days for all three of us please?"

"Of course Harry. Is there anything else Master Lupin? Master Sirius? Harry?"

"Yes, there is one other thing I would like to talk to you about Hogwarts when we are finished if that's okay with you Ty?" Harry asked.

"Of course Harry. Now, if you will please excuse me, I will get the room set up while you get down there."

Sirius was still a little confused as to why Harry was here, and the flaming stork, and a runes and ritual room, but he followed Remus and Harry trying to get his mind thinking straight. How long was Harry going to spend with him and Remus? What would Professor Dumbledore say? Just what was that bird thing he saw? Was Remus going to ever answer his question regarding what he saw?

Sirius was so wrapped up in his thoughts that he didn't notice them enter the runes and ritual room. It wasn't until Remus activated the runes for the time dilation that he noticed where he was at and saw the wizarding tent in the center of the room.

"Will someone please tell me just what is going on? Why are there two clocks on the wall, and why do we need a wizarding tent when we have the whole manor to ourselves?"

Remus and Harry smiled at each other and then sat down to explain what they were doing in this particular room.

After Sirius understood why they were here, Harry told his godfather and uncle what had happened at Hogwarts.

He told them about his meeting with the portrait of Salazar Slytherin and finding out about the basilisk he had left in the Chamber of Secrets. Also his meeting with Myrtle and how Harry found out about how she had died.

He told them about the basilisk's decision to move on to the next great adventure in hopes of finding some forgiveness for his actions against Myrtle under the directions of Tom Riddle.

How Harry had brought Myrtle and the basilisk together to meet each other and to give the king of snakes an opportunity to apologize to her and ask her forgiveness.

Harry told them about having to strike the death blow on the basilisk, and how he felt because of that.

He told them about Myrtle crossing over after getting closure on just how she died.

He told them how Fawkes found him flying on his broom, and taught him to use his talents as a Benu.

He showed Sirius all his forms – but he couldn't stay in the Hippocampus form very long as they didn't have a large body of water around.

To say that Sirius was impressed was an understatement!

Four animagi forms! Each representing an element! It was unheard of! It was amazing! It was a problem! How would they decide what Harry's marauder name should be with so many forms?

"Well as long as you don't call me 'Zoo Keeper' I think I'll be happy." Harry said on that point. "You don't have to give me a name yet, I mean, I haven't really even done my first prank!"

"No but you will need a name before you do your first prank, so we better come up with something before you head home today." Sirius said.

They all laughed at the thought of someone doing the upkeep for those different animals.

Getting back to how Harry was feeling about having to kill the basilisk, Sirius couldn't see what the problem was.

"A THOUSAND YEAR OLD BASILISK! AND YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HAVING TO KILL IT? WHAT WERE YOU THINKING MAN? OF COURSE YOU SHOULD HAVE KILLED IT! IT'S A BASILISK!" Sirius was beside himself even thinking of a beast that size.

"Sirius, I think you're missing the point here." Remus said wisely, "This wasn't some wild animal seeking to hunt and kill anyone and everyone he found: This was a guardian who was misused and show signs of true remorse for having killed an innocent person."

"Think about how you would have felt if you had to put down a faithful watchdog, let's say a Cerberus, after many years of service? How would you feel then?"

"Ya, but that's different." Sirius said, "The Cerberus is the greatest of all dogs and deserves a place of respect among all animals. It's not like the basilisk was the greatest of all... Oh, ya, he is the greatest of all snakes... Oh, ah, well... I'm sorry Harry, I just wasn't thinking right. I can see how that would have been real rough for you there."

Sirius hung his head down hoping he hadn't hurt his godson's feeling too much.

"That's okay Uncle Sirius. I've had a little bit of time to come to grips with my actions. It took Fawkes quite a while to make me see the good that came out of this situation: Myrtle forgiving the basilisk, finding closure with her death and crossing over; The basilisk being about to apologize to Myrtle and making peace with himself over that incident; being able to go on to the next great adventure with a clear conscience, and of course, relieving the world of a thousand year old basilisk." Harry said. This time it sounded like he almost believed himself.

For the rest of the time Harry, Sirius and Remus spent time getting to know one another better by telling about themselves and the life that had lived up to this point.

Sirius was starting to feel like a real godfather too. One of the first things he wanted to do was visit the Dursleys and 'repay' the kindness they showed Harry. Then, visit the Headmaster and do the same thing to him for allowing Harry to be treated that way.

After a lot of talking from Harry and Remus, Sirius was made to admit that things had been resolved in the end, and Harry had things under control at Hogwarts.

Harry loved hearing about Sirius' youth, and the adventures he had with his father and mother, and with the Marauders.

Harry and the others had to come out of the runes and rituals room a little early so Harry could get back to school before the others came out of chamber 8.

"Thanks Uncle Remus, Uncle Sirius. This is just what I needed. I'll see if I can find time to come home more often since it really doesn't take that much time to get here now. I've really enjoyed myself with both of you, and especially you, Uncle Sirius. You've given me the chance to get to know my parents better, and also given me some great ideas for pranks when I get back to school."

"Ah yes, the pranks! Now of course before you do any pranks in the name of the marauders, you must first, of course, be a marauder." Sirius said with a hint of a smile on his face.

"Mr. Padfoot feels it is time to reestablish the Marauders at Hogwarts." Sirius said.

"Mr. Moony concurs with Mr. Padfoot and would ask said Mr. Padfoot by what name this new member should be known by?" Remus replied.

Harry was grinning at Sirius' and Remus' antics as they started to refer to themselves by their marauders name. At the same time however, he was getting worried about what name they would choose for him.

"Mr. Moony brings up a very good point. Mr. Padfoot was thinking along the lines of calling our new member something like 'Sea horse',

or 'Fish tail', or 'Heron', or 'Stork', or 'Fireball', or 'Hippo', or 'Griff', or 'Goat head' or even 'Lions Head'.

Harry was shaking his head hoping Moony had something better.

"Hum, Mr. Moony hadn't considered some of those possibilities. However, instead of causing permanent trauma to our new member, Mr. Moony would respectfully propose to Mr. Padfoot something more along the lines of 'Menagerie' or perhaps 'Keeper' as he does appear to be a one person zoo."

"Keeper... Mr. Padfoot concurs with Mr. Moony. Our young apprentice does indeed seem to be one. A Keeper Mr. Padfoot means."

(A/N This refers back to the 'Zoo Keeper' comment made earlier, not the Quidditch position 'Keeper', though that may throw some people off as to who the new marauder is. Sirius' joke is about the term 'He's (or She's) a keeper' meaning a person has such great personal traits that you would be a fool to ignore them [.com]. I know it's a lame name, but with the size of my writers block, it's the best I can come up with now.)

Both Remus and Harry moaned at the lame joke Sirius was trying to tell.

"Mr. Moony is pleased that Mr. Padfoot agrees with the name for the new marauder and likewise concurs with this decision.."

"Apprentice, step forward." Sirius called out.

Harry stepped forward in front of Remus and Sirius.

"Do you accept the name of 'Keeper' as your new marauder name, and will you do, to the best of your ability, uphold, maintain, and support the ideals of the marauders has been set forth by their past efforts and adventures?" Sirius asked.

Harry kept a straight face and said, "Yes."

This time it was Remus that addressed Harry. "Raise your right hand and repeat the Marauder's Oath."

Harry raised his right hand, and after thinking about all the stories he had heard the last four and a half days said, "I solemnly swear I am up to no good."

"Yes! He was paying attention," Sirius said under his breath. Then getting more 'serious' turned back to Harry and said, "Mr. Padfoot would like to be the first to the first to welcome Mr. Keeper into the Marauders. May you live long, love well, prank hard, and never get caught."

"Mr. Moony would also like to welcome Mr. Keeper into the Marauders. May your pranks be well planed and your name unblemished until your mischief is managed."

"Mr. Keeper would like to thank Misters Moony and Padfoot for allowing me this great honor. Mr. Keeper promises to do his best to see that the legend of the Marauders is never forgotten."

Harry couldn't keep a straight face any more and busted up laughing. Remus and Sirius followed right behind him.

"It's been a long time since I've done that." Sirius said with a tear in his eye. "I feel ten, fifteen years younger. It's almost as if Azkaban never happened." He looked at Harry with mist filled eyes. After a few moments, he hugged Harry as tightly as he could.

"Thank you Harry for everything. For getting me out of that hell-hole, for bringing me back to one of my best friends again, for letting me feel like that life's worth living, for letting me be a godfather to you when you're already more mature then me, and for letting me remember how it feels to be a Marauder. You may look like James, except for your eyes, but you heart, head, and soul are that of Lilly, and I could pay no higher complement to anyone then that."

Sirius and Harry just stood there for several minutes just feeling the love that one felt for the other. This was his family. This was what it meant to be loved. This was home.

"I love you too Sirius." was all he could say.

"Harry, it's time. You really need to be heading back to Hogwarts." Remus said quietly.

Nodding his head and sniffing, Harry broke his hug with Sirius and thanked Remus.

"Thanks Remus. Ya know I love you too don't ya?" asked Harry.

"Ya, I know." Remus said giving Harry a quick hug. "Now go on, get out of here. I want to hear from Min that the Marauders have returned to Hogwarts."

"I'll be sure that she notices what's going on when it happens." Harry said with a smile. "Well, I best be getting back before I'm missed." With that, Harry turned into the Benu and fire-traveled back to Hogwarts.

Harry arrived back to his trunk in the living quarters in chamber 5 just as Sassy was bringing Ron, Hermione, Susan, and Neville out of chamber 8.

"I guess my letter took a little longer to get through then I thought it would." Harry lied. "What all did you accomplish while I was gone?"

Hermione answered for the group. "Of course we got all our homework done and all the reading for the upcoming week, but some of us took a little more prompting then others." As she looked in Ron's direction giving him a death glare.

Ron, for his part, did lower his head and looked properly chastened at Hermione's comments.

"At least Ron did better at his studies after he got through playing Sassy a few games of Wizards Chess with him if he did his homework." Hermione continued. "I never knew a house-elf could be so good at that game."

Harry looked over to Sassy who had just finished bringing some butterbeer out for the children to drink. He saw a big smile on her as she held her head up high at the acknowledgment from Hermione.

Ron, for his part said, "Who knew a house-elf could get so lucky five games in a row?"

Harry and the others laughed, as they got ready to head to the Great Hall for Dinner.

Later that evening, when everyone had gone to bed. Harry returned to his trunk and called for Ty.

"You wished to see me Master Harry?" Ty asked.

"It's just Harry Ty if you please, and yes I did want to talk to you." Harry was mentally kicking himself for not asking Ty sooner.

"While you were cleaning Hogwarts, you mentioned finding some 'hidden' rooms that looked like they might have belonged to the Founders?"

"Why, yes Master Harry we did. You already found the opening to Master Slytherin's chamber. We did not go any further then the opening on that chamber. However, both Master Gryffindor and Mistress Ravenclaw both had chambers that looked like they were used for living in and studying. Mistress Hufflepuff did not have a chamber as such, but we found a foundation of a greenhouse and living quarters behind Hogwarts where there was a different magical feel then the area around it."

Harry was excited to hear that each of the other founders also had rooms or some place where the new heirs could study or work.

"Ty, could you please show me where Lady Ravenclaw's chamber is at? I've been trying to study the tome Raven gave to me, and haven't had much luck. I'll also ask the other heirs if they would like to know where their founder's room or greenhouse are located. If they do, you can show it to them, or in Susan's case, rebuild her greenhouse."

The thought of rebuilding the Hufflepuff greenhouse had Ty very excited. It was about all he could do to not jump up and down at the thought of such a historic project.

"Yes Master Harry, please follow me so I can show you where Mistress Ravenclaw's chamber is located!"

Harry and Ty exited his trunk in the Room of Requirements. Harry shrank the trunk and took it with him.

Ty lead him down the hallway in the direction of the library. Just prior to the library, Harry saw, for the first time, a dark corridor with pictures of students studying on each side.

"Why didn't I see this before Ty?" Harry asked.

One of the students in the picture raised her head from the book she was reading and answered, "The Hall of Knowledge only makes it's self know when the rightful heir seeks after it. Seek, and ye shall find." With that the student went back to reading her book.

Harry looked at Ty and said "Well, I guess that answers that question."

Entering the hallway, Harry noticed pictures and painting of every side. Each depicting a teaching situation or key moment when some great discovery was made. 'I'll have to come back to these to look at them more closely later' Harry thought. He could sense 'Ma' was also very excited to come back to view and talk to some of the painting they saw.

At the end of the hallway was an ornate door with no door knob or handle.

'How am I to get in a room with no handle?' Harry thought. "Ty, do you know how to get into this room?" Harry ask.

"For house-elves, we just 'slide' into a room. But, if you want to have the room recognize you, you must enter it the normal way. I'm sorry Master Harry; I do not know any other way to get into the room."

"That's okay Ty, you've done great to show me this much. I think I can take it from here. I'll let you know when I talk to the other heirs to see if they want to have their greenhouse rebuilt, or where Gryffindor's chamber is at, thanks." With that, Ty went back to Lupin Manor.

Harry stood there for several minutes thinking about this door and something that the girl in the picture had said.

'What did she mean by 'Seek and ye shall find'? That sounds so familiar.'

'I think she was referring to one of the early teachings of Christ in the New Testament.' 'Ma' replied. 'It's been many years since I've been to Sunday school, but in what was from a passage called 'The Sermon on the Mount' Christ told those who followed him to 'Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.' (St. Matthew 7:7 KJV).

'Well, the 'Ask and it shall be given you' sounds like the Room of Requirements. The little girl said that you had to seek for this hallway to find it. So I wonder...' Harry stepped up to the door and gently knocked on it.

Somewhat to his surprise, the door opened silently.

Cautiously, Harry entered the room. He found that it had been cleaned and polished. There seemed to be row after row of books, tomes and scrolls along both walls. They seemed to go on forever, but at the same time, everything you needed was right at hand. There was a large desk in the center of the room with a large, padded chair behind it. Harry could see off to one side another doorway where he knew would lead to the 'living area' of this chamber.

Harry was startled out of his thoughts when he heard a voice behind him say "Ah young one, welcome to the Room of Knowledge. I have been waiting for you to come here since Hogwarts told me my heir had returned."

Harry turned quickly, getting in a fighting stance, with his wand in his hand in an instant. He froze when he saw a life-size portrait of a lovely woman dressed in flowing blue robes and bright green eyes looking at him where the door used to be.

The lady in the portrait raised an eyebrow when she saw Harry's reaction. "Are you sure you are my heir and not one of Godric's? You seem as jumpy as Godric was after pulling a prank on Salazar knowing that Sal was going to get him back."

Harry immediately stood up straight and put away his wand.

Bowing his head slightly he said, "Please forgive me my Lady, I meant you no disrespect or harm. I have had to be careful of my surroundings since I was a young child. My name is Harry James

Potter, son of James Harold Potter, and Lily Potter nee Evens. They were both sorted into Gryffindor, which is where I am currently housed."

"Ah yes, Sir Toppum's apprentice. I'm sure he hasn't had that much fun in sorting a student in a very long time. As you may have surmised, I am Lady Rowena Ravenclaw. I remember when your mother was here. It is a shame she was not sorted into my house as she should have been, but according to Sir Toppum, she had already had some bad experiences with some older students who were in my house while getting her supplies in Diagon Alley." The Lady in the portrait sighed and shook her head in disappointment. "To think that some people would let their prejudices and bigotry prevent an heir from being sorted into their proper house. But then..." she looked down at Harry with a smile on her face and love in her eyes, "If she had not been sorted into Gryffindor, she would probably have never met or dated your father, and then, you would not be here. What can I do for you young heir? Do you have the items I gave my young house-elf all those years ago?"

Harry was stunned at the beauty and grace of the lady in the portrait. She radiated love and wisdom that he felt drawn to like a moth to a flame.

Coming out of his stupor when he realized he had been asked a question. Harry blushed and lowered his head again. "Forgive me Lady Ravenclaw. I have come to see if I could find a way to open and study the journal I received from Raven, and to learn of the coronet of power and knowledge." Harry then took out his trunk and restored it to full size. Opening the trunk up, he took out the journal and placed it in left hand while summoning the Ravenclaw's staff to his right.

Lady Ravenclaw look surprised and impressed with Harry's display of magic, but she was also confused.

"But I gave those items to Elijah. Who is this Raven you mentioned?"

"Forgive me, my lady, allow me to explain." Harry then told her of the gathering of house-elves and how when he call for all the house-elves from Ravenclaw, only one appeared and how he said it had

been so long since he had spoken to anyone, he could not remember his name and asked to be called 'Raven'.

Harry told her how Raven had impressed the other house-elves, and how, after he had accomplished his task, had asked to be released so he could enter the next great adventure as a free elf, and there meet his mistress again and as a free elf pledge to her again his life and service as a friend of his own free will and choice.

At the end of the tale, Lady Ravenclaw had tears in her eyes when she realized that there had not been another worthy heir that had called for the birthright items for nearly nine hundred years. She was amazed at the faithfulness of Raven to see the completion of his duty.

It took some time for her to compose herself after the story.

"I pray I can be found worthy of such love and devotion as shown here. Please excuse me for a few moments." With that, she stepped out of the portrait.

Harry wasn't sure what he should do. After a few minutes, he walked over to the desk and placed the journal and the staff on it. Walking back to his trunk, he brought out the portrait of Salazar Slytherin and restored it to full size.

'Ah, young heir, you have found Rowena's chamber I see.' Sal said while looking around. He looked disappointed when he saw her portrait was empty. What could have happen? He wondered.

'Yes, I did. But how did you know about it? I thought all the founders chambers were a secret from one another?' Harry replied.

Suddenly Harry heard a gasp from Lady Ravenclaw's portrait.

"Sal, is that really you?" Lady Ravenclaw asked.

"Yes Roe, it's me. It has been to long."

Harry was surprised the Salazar wasn't speaking in Parseltongue. "Ah, did I miss something?" He asked. "Why don't you speak normally to me? Why will you only respond to me in parseltongue?"

Sal looked at Harry and said 'Because as the heir of Slytherin you should know the true tongue. It is your duty!'

"Oh Sal, quit hissing at the boy and speak normally. I know the only real reason you do it is to piss Godric off because he can't learn or understand it." Lady Ravenclaw said.

Harry looked up at her portrait and asked 'Do you understand parseltongue?'

'Well of course I do. How could I be married to Sal for ninety four years and not understand it.' came her reply.

"Now stop this foolishness and place his portrait up here on the wall if you would please Harry?" Lady Ravenclaw said switching back to English.

"Yes milady, as you wish milady." Harry said with a smirk on his lips.

"Oh hush you," the portrait said. "And when you're in here it's Rowena, or Aunt Roe is that understood?"

"Yes Aunt Roe, thank you. Now before I place Sal up on the wall and you two reacquaint yourselves, what can I do with the journal while you're away?"

"Now he's starting to sound like the Potter side of the family." Sal said under his breath.

Rowena looked impatiently at Sal and then Harry. "The Journal can only be opened and read here by one who is deemed worthy. The other book and items you see around here must also remain in this room where they are held in stasis or they will revert to their actual age and turn to powder."

"Thank you milady." Harry said with a smirk, then quickly took Sal's portrait and placed it on the wall next to Rowena's.

"You'll probable want to stay here now won't you Sal?" Harry asked.

"Well, maybe he does have some of your brain after all Roe. Yes, Harry if it wouldn't too much to ask. I've only not seen her for what?

Nearly nine hundred years!" came the sarcastic reply. "Now be a good Ravenclaw and go and study."

Rowena was rolling her eyes and had her hands on her hips looking somewhat disappointed. "Now Sal, there's no reason to use that tone of voice with Harry. I can make you wait another nine hundred year if I have to."

"You wouldn't!" Sal blinked.

"I might! Now apologize to Harry before I change my mind."

"Young heir, please forgive me for my outburst. It was uncalled for." Sal said sincerely and with a bit of pleading in his voice.

Harry almost laughed at the scene before him now. The great Salazar Slytherin, put in his place by Rowena Ravenclaw. He knew women in general had a certain 'sway' over men, but he still didn't understand it fully... yet.

'One day you'll understand Harry.' He heard 'Ma' say as if remembering something special. 'It was the same way with your father.'

Without further delay, Harry placed the portrait of Salazar Slytherin next to Rowena Ravenclaw's on the wall.

"Thank you Harry. Now if you'll excuse us, we have a few things we need to catch up on. Please feel free to read in the journal and any of the other articles you find in my chamber. I'm not sure how long this will take. It may be some time." Rowena said kindly.

"Oh come on wench! He's a big boy, I'm sure he'll find something to do." Salazar said impatiently.

Rowena looked at Salazar with a cold stare. Before she could say anything, however, Harry spoke. "If its extra time you're looking for, I have a chamber in my trunk that can provide five days worth of time over the next four hours."

"Of course! How could I have forgotten! That wonderful chamber with the time dilation spell." Sal said mentally hitting himself in the forehead.

"Because you were thinking with the wrong 'head' as usual." came Rowena's short reply.

Harry didn't understand exactly what she meant by that, but had to smile again when he saw how red Sal's face went when she said it.

Rowena came over into Sal's portrait, and Harry took them down to chamber eight in his trunk where Sassy has set up the usual wizarding tent. Harry placed the portrait in it and went to leave. "I can't be in here when the time dilation spell is started, so I will have one of my house-elves start it after I leave. Is there anything you need in the meantime?" Harry asked sincerely.

"No Harry, Sal's portrait has everything we need. We'll see you in five days then. And thank you again for giving us this extra time together." Rowena said graciously, but at the same time Harry could tell she also wanted to start spending some time with her husband.

Harry exited the chamber and called Sassy to activate the spell. He then went up to study Rowena's journal.

To say the journal was fascinating would be a vast understatement. In it, Harry found the history of the four founders. Where they came from, how they got together, and how exactly they built Hogwarts.

It gave a depiction of their daily life in the early days of the school, along with the classes, lessons, spells, charms, and potions that were taught.

It also talked about the relationship between the staff and the coronet, but it made very little sense to him. How could they be one in the same? Even if they were, how did you get one to become the other?

There were many prophecies made by Lady Ravenclaw. Most had already been fulfilled. Some Harry didn't understand, others things he read in there he just didn't want to know about.

Then there was the story of why Salazar left Hogwarts.

Sal was not hateful or fearful of muggle-born magic users. He was fearful FOR them. He was afraid they would be treated as HE had

been when his parents found out HE could do magic. Yes, Salazar Slytherin was a muggle-born!

Late in his life, Sal had gone out to try to find those who were muggle-born so he could bring them back to Hogwarts to be taught and train. There had been many rumors of the muggle-born witches and wizards being rounded up and killed by both the 'pure-blood' wizards and muggle community due to the prejudices and superstitions of the day.

In one of the villages he was visiting a very bad fight broke out in which many of the muggles and few of the muggle-born children died.

Salazar himself was killed by a 'pure-blood' while he was making sure some of the muggle-born were port-keyed to Hogwarts safely. However, due to the number of villagers and muggle-born killed; the writers of history twisted the story to make it appear that he Salazar will against the muggle-born.

If only Draco or Voldemort could read that part of the journal.

It was very late now and Harry had to get back to the Common Room before curfew. He called Sassy to him and told her to go and tell Aunt Roe and Uncle Sal that they could use the chamber for the full eight hours today (ten days compressed time) and four hours tomorrow (five days compressed time) since he had to go to class. He explained that if they asked why they couldn't use the chamber for the full eight hours both days, remind Sal, (or tell Aunt Roe) about the time he had committed to the other students from 7:00 to 9:00 every evening.

Harry also asked Sassy if she would be able to bring Sal's portrait back here to the Room of Knowledge when they were finished with their use of the chamber.

Sassy indicated that it wouldn't be any problem bring the portrait back to this room since she was bound to not only the House of Potter, but also the House of Ravenclaw and Slytherin.

Harry then wrote some notes to the heirs of Gryffindor and Hufflepuff telling them of his (Ty's) discovery, and asking them if they would like Ty to show (or re-build in the case of Hufflepuff) their own

private chambers. He gave these notes to Sassy to give to Hedwig. He was sure she would love the exercise.

Harry then quickly headed for the Gryffindor Common Room.

The next day went very well for Harry. Well, as well as could be expected. Professor Snape still hated him with a passion and tried to sabotage his potion and Professor Quirrell just made him feel cold and paranoid. It didn't help matters much that Durendal was constantly telling Harry just how dark Professor Quirrell was, and that something about the man was making it hard to maintain the shield around the 'Tom Riddle' portion of his core.

After bidding Ron, Hermione, Neville and Susan good evening, Hermione asked why Harry wasn't coming back to the Common Room immediately. Harry made the mistake of telling them that he had 'something to checkout by the library'. As soon as he said that he knew it was a mistake.

"I'd love to go the library too Harry. There might even be a new book to read once we get there." Hermione said.

"Ah, no Hermione, that's alright. I'm not going TO the library. I'm going to checkout something CLOSE TO the library. There's a big difference." Harry hoped he had dissuaded her from coming with him. Instead, she seemed to be more insistent in coming with him.

"Well then you can walk me to the library and show me what's so interesting by the library."

"It's really not something I'm ready to show anyone right now. And to be quite honest, it is something rather personal."

"What are you trying to hide from us Harry?" Ron asked with a hint of jealousy in his voice.

Harry just looked at Ron over his glasses. Ron got the message that he still needed to work on his Gryffindor character traits.

"Oh, sorry, never mind." Ron said quietly.

"Now I'm sorry but I really must be on my way." With that, Harry started running down the hallway towards the library. He ignored Hermione's calls to wait for her, that she was coming too.

Harry was so upset that he didn't even remember that all he had to do was 'slide' to the Hallway of Knowledge. But even if he did remember, that was one of many things he did not want people to know about.

Turning the corner just in front of Hermione, Harry thought very hard on finding the Hallway of Knowledge. Immediately before him he saw the portrait on the wall separate for him as he entered. Looking back, Harry could see out, but he could see Hermione looking around trying to find where he had gone to. Finally, she appeared to go into the library to look for him, or maybe find a good book to read.

Continuing down the hallway, Harry finally came to the large, ornate door. Taking a moment to gather his thoughts, he paused, and then, knocked on the door.

The door immediately opened for him, and Harry proceeded into the room. He walked all the way to the desk and chair and sat down before he looked up on the wall to find Aunt Roe and Uncle Sal sitting down to a late evening tea.

"Thank you again Harry for the use of your time dilation chamber, and for the extra ten days. I didn't know I had so much catching up to do with my husband." Rowena said with a pleasant smile on her face. Sal for his part just looked very interested in the cup of tea that was before him now.

"Ah, yes. Thanks son." was all Sal would say before going back to his tea.

"You're more than welcome. I'm sure if you would like, I could arrange it so both of you could be in the wizarding tent when my friends and I go there to study and train." Harry offered.

"Oh no Harry, we wouldn't want to deprive you and your friends from your privacy." Rowena said blushing lightly.

"Privacy? I don't think that would be much of a problem. We just go there so we can finish our homework, read the next week's

assignments or related material, and exercise our magical core by dueling or casting spells at the practice targets. You may not have known this, but most of the children born in the last forty years have had a block placed on their magical core if their power rating was over a certain level. I am using this time to help the others get their core up to where it should be.

"At 'night' the girls go to one room and us boys go to another room. If you would like we could even give you two your own room so you wouldn't be distracted by us. I don't know if I want to tell the others about you yet, but I'm sure there would be a time where either one or both of you could help us in our studies."

Even with all the time Harry had spent in chamber eight, his hormones had not yet fully kicked in, and hopefully wouldn't for another year or two (unless Sirius had anything to say about that). So, he really didn't understand what Rowena and Sal were talking about.

Salazar was furious that someone would do that to children without their knowledge or their parent's permission. He stood up quickly from the table with his wand drawn ready for a fight.

"WHERE IS THE HEATHEN WHO WOULD DARE PLACE A BLOCK ON THE CORE OF THE MAGICAL CHILDREN? BRING THEM HEATHER AND I WILL EVISCERATE THEM!" He roared.

"Ah, Uncle Sal, you don't have to yell. I took care of it. Well, my parents and I." Harry said trying to calm Salazar down.

He then told both Sal and Rowena about his birth and what the Ministry with Professor Dumbledore had done and how his parents had prevented the block to be placed on him. Both Sal and Rowena were not pleased with what the Headmaster had done.

Harry needed to quickly change the subject if he wanted to get back to the Gryffindor Common Room before curfew.

"Aunt Roe? The main reason I came down here tonight was to ask you about some of the things you wrote in your journal, and to see if you knew anything about a room where you can think of what you need and it will appear?"

"Ah yes! That is my other special requirements chamber. I believe the house-elves call it the Coming-and-Going room because it seems to come and go as you need it. Is that the room you are talking about Harry?"

"Yes! Exactly! My friends and I call it The Room of Requirements since it seems to give you anything you require. Could you tell me a little more about that room please? Does it have any limitation?"

"Oh my yes, it has its limitations Harry. It cannot create life or bring things back to life. Its only limitation is that the thoughts or imagination of the person who is projecting their thoughts, or who is in control of the room. They must be able to think clearly enough, and with as much detail as possible so that the room understands what is wanted.

"Of course, the longer the room has been around, the more familiar it is with what is wanted and it can remember from past experience and make modifications to meet the current user's needs."

"The items can be created by either conjuring it, or transfiguring an item from one thing to another. Hogwarts herself power the room and so has a very large, but not limitless supply of energy.

"If the user of the room requests a book, and the room can't find it in its local storage, it can copy the book or scroll from my library here. Every book, tome, scroll or note that has ever entered or as been produced within the walls of Hogwarts has been copied and stored in this library."

"It is one of the things Hogwarts does for me and the only way I have prevented myself from becoming bored with my existence over the many centuries that I have been awake. I find myself living through the lives and experience of all the students that have come through these halls. Some, like your mother, bring me great joy with their wonder and excitement of being here. Others, like Tom Riddle, make me sad for the bitterness and waste of humanity I feel from them."

"Overall though, it has been a very rewarding existence."

"Aunt Roe? Just how many volumes do you have here in your library?" Harry asked.

"I would venture to guess there may be more volumes of text than even the Great library in Alexandria."

Harry could almost feel him 'Ma' giddiness over wanting to go through entire library.

Harry was thinking of the information he could find out about his parents and friends – or even his enemies within the confines of this library.

Rowena continued, "Of course when the book is created in the Coming-and-going room it is not permanent and will disappear as soon as the user either leaves the room, or tries to remove the book from the room, the energy used to create the book or artifact being returned back to Hogwarts to user again."

"How about the part in your journal where you say your staff and coronet are the same thing? When Raven gave it to me, he said the staff was a 'key' to the coronet. Which one is correct?"

"Well, both are Harry. You have to learn how to use the staff before you can use the coronet. The coronet contains all my knowledge and power, and even though your mind and core are better developed than almost at Hogwarts, it would still be best if you were allowed to mature a bit more before telling you the secret of the staff. Please be patient."

Harry knew he wouldn't get any further with Aunt Roe on that subject so he moved on.

"Uncle Sal? Do you have a room like this in your chamber as well?"

"Yes young heir, I do. It is the perfect place to study potions and the more powerful spell that have been created with parseltongue." Salazar replied.

"Oh! Of course, you've been down to Sal's chamber Harry. Did he shown you is 'little' pet down there?" Rowena asked innocently. She could not see Sal was trying to stop her from asking the question.

Harry lowered his head and answered, "Yes. I met the great basilisk. He still felt bad about his part in being used by Tom Riddle in killing

one of your Ravenclaw, Moaning Myrtle, almost fifty years ago, and as such, asked me to send it on to the next great adventure as honor would demand." Harry felt better about the situation, but it was still a sore point for him. Between Harry and Salazar, they told Rowena what had transpired just a few days ago, though to Harry and Salazar it felt like several months had passed since they had both been in the time dilation chamber.

"Oh, I'm sorry Harry I didn't mean to bring it up to make you feel bad. I was aware that Myrtle had not returned to the girl's bathroom on the second floor since you took her down into the Chamber of Secrets, but I did not know the reason why. I can only see what happens within the wards of Hogwarts. Not down in Sal's 'play room' as we use to call it."

Harry recovered and asked the one last question that had been plaguing him that night.

"Aunt Roe? How do you communicate with Hogwarts?"

End of Chapter 25.

AN

One again I would like to apologize for taking six months to put this out. Thank you for your understanding.

I know Harry has communicated with Hogwarts before, like when he was arriving on the boats with the rest of the first years and Harry felt the 'identification ward' acknowledge him as Ravenclaw's heir. He asked 'the ward' to not let the Headmaster know who the heir was, and it obeyed.

There was also the time in the Headmaster's office when Harry 'asked Hogwarts' to cut him off from the wards of the school that tell him what was going on in the school and it did.

The question Harry is asking is more along the lines of 'How can 'she' (Hogwarts) talk back to Harry?'

I will try to keep working on the next chapter since I'm already sitting in front of the computer.

The next chapter should have a little bit of Quidditch, Winter Break with Remus and Sirius, Returning to Ollivander's to pickup his staff, Dealing with Draco's ego, some more animagi and a Prank on the school. I hope you stay tune.

Rdgale

Chapter 26 – Quidditch and a Staff

The portrait of Rowena Ravenclaw looked down at her young heir.

"Why do you ask this young heir?" She asked. "If I'm not mistaken, you have already communicated with Hogwarts many times. Do you not remember coming across the lake in the boats? As soon as you passed through the identification wards and they identified you as an Heir of the Founders, you asked Hogwarts not to tell the Headmaster that you were the Heir of Ravenclaw.

Again, in the Headmaster's office, you asked Hogwarts to withdraw or withhold information from him so you could make your point. Did you not realize that you were communicating with Hogwarts then?"

Harry felt embarrassed for having asked the question. "Ya, I probable should have known that. However, at the time, I didn't realize that it was 'Hogwarts' that I was talking to... I just thought that it was really just ... well, I really didn't know who or what I was talking to. I just thought it was the 'wards' around the school I asked not to do their job and report to the Headmaster. I know I did get a feeling back from 'the wards' that it would do what I had asked it to do at the time. I've never really tried to 'talk' to Hogwarts. I mean, ya, I've always thought of Hogwarts as the 'mothering' type, you know, helping all the students learn magic. I just never pictured Hogwarts as being able to talk to me. Does that make any sense to you Aunt Roe?"

"Yes, I can see where you would think that way, but you should know that the wards are connected directly to Hogwarts herself, and not to the Headmaster. Unless you are a very powerful wizard that can overpower the wards, or overlay your own wards over the existing ones, they are going to work just as designed. "

"The wards themselves do not have the 'intelligence' to talk back, or reply to you. It is the one that controls the wards that can decide what is to be done. So yes, you have already talked to Hogwarts on many different occasions. You just didn't realize that that is what you were doing."

"Now, according to Sir Toppum, you are somewhat proficient at speaking with the essences of magical item; like your sword,

Durendal, or the Sorting Hat or even the essence your mother left within you the night Sal's pretend heir killed your family."

"What are you talking about woman?" Sal joined the conversation for the first time. "You're making my heir Harry here sound like one of those 'schizophrenic' you were telling me about. Do you think he's one of those people who have a bunch of different people running around inside his mind? Now true, the boy may not be quite right in the head, but I would think that was more from being your heir by birth, then my heir by conquest."

Now it was Roe's turn to give Salazar a dirty look. "You haven't talked to Robert since you've been woken have you?" She asked coldly.

"And just why should I do something like that?" Sal responded defensively, looking down his nose as if he smelt something foul. "I didn't care for Godric's old head rag when I was alive and we put all those charms on it, so I'm surely not going to start caring about it now, am I?"

"Well, if you would have taken to time to talk to him or Hogwarts, you would realize that OUR heir here is a very special young man." Roe started.

"Between his Godfather and his mother, Harry here has survived the killing curse when just a baby."

"Yes, I already knew about that!" Sal responded coldly.

"His mother also did something that I have never seen before in leaving her essences in Harry's mind to help him survive until he could find a loving friend who would care of him." Roe was making these statements with great pride in Harry and Lily's accomplishments.

"You would also know that the sword Harry bears is the same sword once carried by Prince Roland! The same sword Godric tried to copy when he made his sword. You would also know that the sword, Durendal, is sentient and can only be used by the honest in heart."

"Yes, I knew about the sword too." Sal grumbled, "And I saw what Harry could do with it!"

"The one last thing you would have realized about Harry," Roe continued after being interrupted. "Is that his magic and soul is MUCH older than his eleven year old body would indicate."

Looking at Harry Rowena asked, "Just how much time did you spend in that chamber in your trunk Harry?"

Harry blushed at the question. He remembered all the time he and Sassy had spent in chamber eight since he found it.

"I found the trunk and the chamber shortly after my eighth birthday. I would usually spend four hours in it in the morning after breakfast, and then four hours at night every day from then until I came to Hogwarts. It's just that there was so much that I could learn and do while getting away from the Dursleys."

"Yes, that is what I thought." Roe said. "Harry, do you have any idea how much time that added up to for you down in chamber eight?"

"Well," he responded, "A full eight hours of outside time was stretched into ten days inside the chamber, so I guess you could say that for every 36.5 days real time would be equal to 365 days of trunk time. If I did it every day, and I think I did before I came to Hogwarts, that means that for every year I studied in the trunk would have been equal to ten years inside time (not counting for leap year)."

"So from my eighth birthday until I came to Hogwarts would have been (8 to 9, 9 to 10, 10 to 11...)." Harry counted on his fingers just to make sure he did it right. "Almost thirty years of training in the trunk! Boy, I never realized that." Harry said to himself. He remembered Remus asking him a question or two about how old he thought he really was.

Coming back to the present he asked: "Aunt Roe, does that make me what, forty one years old or am I still just eleven?" Harry was afraid he might be an old man and not even know it.

Rowena looked down at Harry and smiled at him as she shook her head.

"No Harry, you aren't forty one years old. You are still just eleven. However, your MAGIC IS forty one years old. That is part of the reason why you can do some of the things you can do."

"If you were to continue to use the time chamber until you graduate from Hogwarts, what would that mean?"

Harry thought for a moment before he gasped and looked up at the individuals in the portrait.

"I'd be just seventeen years old, but my magic would be over one hundred years old! Is that what you mean Aunt Roe?"

"Exactly Harry." Roe answered proudly. "You would have the magical maturity of a person like Albus Dumbledore, or Salazar here, or even Godric Gryffindor when they were in their prime in a seventeen year old body."

Harry was overwhelmed at the thought of having that much magical power so early in life.

"I will have you know Madame that I am still in the prime of my life." Salazar stated with a very sophisticated air about him.

"That's just the way your portrait was painted Sal." Rowena replied, trying to take him down a notch or two. "Do you want me to remind you of some of the problems you had later in life?" She challenged him with a raised eyebrow.

"Quiet woman!" Salazar sputtered. "I'm sure Harry has no desire to hear what awaits him as he enters the twilight of his life!"

"Oh, I don't know," Harry said acting innocent. "Maybe it would give me time to prepare for a time when I'm old and decrepit." He winked at Rowena in her portrait.

"Old and decrepit? Old and decrepit!" Salazar spat. "I'll show you old and decrepit! Just for that, I'm not going to tell you where my study room is in my chamber. You'll just have to find it for yourself... If you can get past the wards that I placed around it. That will show you who's decrepit!"

"Oh Sal, you really don't want to do that now do you?" Asked Rowena in a very forceful tone.

"And why wouldn't I..." started Salazar. Then looking at his wife, realized what she was getting at.

"Ah, no, I wouldn't want to do that to you Harry. I will of course help you when you go to look for my study room in the Chamber of Secrets... I guess, seeing as I have no real chose in the matter." He responded in a defeated tone.

Harry heard 'Ma' say 'Wiped' in reference to Salazar's response.

"Okay, this is all fine and good, but it still doesn't get me any closer to really communicating with Hogwarts now does it." Harry said trying to bring the discussion back to his main subject.

"Of course you are correct Harry." Rowena replied.

"Hogwarts is very excited to have an heir to talk with after so many years."

"Before you can really communicate with Hogwarts, you must first be able to cast your conciseness into a higher realm of existence. You must be able to enter the astral plane and then open you mind and your heart to the magic that is in Hogwarts. Reach out and see if you can feel her; if you can sense her."

"How do I do that?" Harry asked. "How do I reach this 'astral plane'?"

Rowena looked lovingly down at Harry and said, "Just close your eyes and stretch your senses. Use your mage-sight and seek where the realm of the physical end and the realm of the pure magic begin."

Harry did as his Aunt had told him. He closed his eyes and slowly let his mage sense expand outward looking for the limits of his physical world.

After what seemed like hours, he felt himself coming to the top of a very large box. He could not see where the box ended, but he could

feel the pressure of something telling him that he was at the 'end of the line'.

'Is this what Aunt Roe was talking about? Is this the end of my physical world?'

Harry was amazed at everything he could sense while he was here at the edge of his physical world. He could see his mind-scape and everything he and 'Ma' had done. He could see 'Potter in the Mind' where he and Durendal worked and studied together. He could see his magical core laid out before him like a great sea of power, ready to respond to his command, and he could see the portion of that core that was tainted by 'Tom Riddle'. But how was any of this going to help him move to the astral plane?

'You're trying too hard son.' Harry heard his 'Ma' say.

'Remember, it is just your spirit, or your conciseness that can enter the astral plane. You must let go of your physical body and just will yourself there with your magic.'

'Let go of my body? Doesn't that mean that my spirit will leave my body? Doesn't that mean... that I'd be dead?' 'Ma' could hear the worry in Harry's voice and understood his concerns.

'Yes, technically when your spirit leaves your body you would be considered dead. That is one of the reasons why so few people successful transition to the astral plane. However, if you are strong enough, and skilled enough, you can use your magic to 'tether' your spirit to your physical body. Your body would still be alive, and as long as your magic was strong enough, you will be able to return to it when you want.'

'Do you think I can do this 'Ma'?' Harry asked frightfully.

'Ma' smiled at Harry and said 'If anyone can, you can son. I have complete faith in you and your abilities.'

Taking courage from this, Harry again closed his eyes and focused first on his magic. 'Ma' said he needed to use is magic like a tether, so he envisioned a long rope that he would secure around his spirit to his physical body so that he could return when he needed to.

Next, he 'willed' his spirit to leave his body, making sure his magical tether was secured around him.

What he experienced was like nothing he had experienced before.

It felt as if he was entering a dark void with no up or down. No right or left. To say Harry was frightened would be an understatement. He knew he was moving – or at least he had the sensation of movement, but he couldn't tell where to, or which direction. The only thing he concentrated on was his magical tether. He could feel pressure against it – like when a rope is being let out with tension on it, so he knew he was alright (he hoped).

After what seemed like years – but at the same time – as if no time at all had passed, Harry saw a point of light in the far distance. It was as if someone had lit a single candle in a completely dark room – it didn't take much to be noticed, and it seemed very bright despite being so far away from him.

With the same strange sense of time taking forever, yet not taking any time at all, Harry found himself at the source of the light.

It was a strange place. Everything was white. There was nothing there to tell you where the ground ended, and the 'sky' (if that's what you could call it) began.

"I knew you could do it honey." Harry heard a voice say behind him.

Turning quickly around he saw 'Ma' and Durendal, but not as they appeared in his mind. Here they looked and sounded real.

Harry ran up to 'Ma' and was surprised that when he 'hugged' her, he could really touch her.

'Ma' was also a little surprised, but greatly pleased that here she could show her 'son' just how much she loved him as well.

"Yes, Master Harry, very well indeed." Said Durendal, looking somewhat uncomfortable with the show of affection. "However things seem to be changing." He nodded to a space behind Harry. "We best be prepared for what every we encounter here."

Harry turned back around and saw that indeed things had changed.

Where nothing had been just a few moments ago stood a castle that looked very much like Hogwarts – only much larger. It looked pristine and new, as if it had just been built. The fields, lakes, and forest that surrounded Hogwarts were also present, only it too looked new and alive.

Harry, 'Ma', and Durendal approached the structure with a great sense of awe and anticipation. As they were nearly at the door of the castle, they opened and out stepped the most beautiful women Harry had ever seen. 'No offense 'Ma' Harry thought.

'None taken son.' 'Ma' thought back.

Harry was surprised he could still hear 'Ma' in his head, and that she knew what he had been thinking. He looked back at 'Ma' and blushed. "Sorry about that."

"No Harry, you are quite right, she is the most beautiful person I've ever seen as well."

Harry blushed again and turned back around to greet their hostess.

Both groups stopped about 2 meters from each other and took a few moments to just observe the other.

Harry slowly expanded his senses and could tell that whoever this person was, she was very powerful and wise. He was completely beside himself. His mouth was gaping open at the 'woman' before him.

In many ways she looked like the older version of someone he had seen before and should know, but he just couldn't place his finger on who it was. She had long red hair that seemed to be blown by an unseen breeze, a porcelain clear complexion and smooth skin, and ... freckles? The robe she wore was a brilliant white with gold trim, long and flowing. It seemed to move in the unseen breeze.

"You're so beautiful!" Harry said softly. "Oh! I'm sorry! I just don't expect to see someone as lovely as you in my life. No, that's not what I mean..."

The hostess laughed softly, and Harry thought a choir of angels was singing. "Hello young master. I have waited many years to again find an heir of the founders worthy to approach me here. I hope you find this form pleasing?"

Harry just shook his head. He found that he couldn't even respond beyond that. That fact was making him very frustrated with himself.

"Come Master Harry; do not be embarrassed or afraid." Their hostess closed the gap between them. As she did, she held out both her arms toward him, as if welcoming him into a warm embrace. Harry automatically responded by taking both her hands in his.

The hostess pulled Harry into her and gave him a kind, loving embrace – like one would give to a friend after a long absence.

After a few moments, she began to glow, and Harry glowed with her. A feeling of overwhelming peace and contentment came over him. He could feel her love and concern for him, and her power and wisdom. He knew he would do everything in his power to protect and defend her from all enemies, both within and without her walls.

All too soon the embrace ended, and Harry felt the loss from her touch.

It took a few moments for Harry to grasp what was going on here, and what he had just done. When he came out of his stupor, he blushed deeply.

Stepping back he asked, "What do I call you?"

The hostess smiled and simply said, "You may call me Lady Hogwarts. Not a very imaginative or flattering name I know, but it will do for now."

Harry agreed with their hostess, it didn't sound very flattering, but it was who she was.

"Please forgive me Lady Hogwarts. I was unprepared to find one as lovely and fair as thyself in this place. I am Lord Harry James Potter, Paladin, at your service." Harry ended his introduction with a gentlemanly bow.

"May I introduce Durendal, the essences of the Sword of Prince Roland, and my 'Ma', the essences of my mother in life, Lady Lily Evans Potter."

Lady Hogwarts approached the other members in the group.

She gave 'Ma' the same type of embrace she had given Harry. When they broke, he could see tears of joy in 'Ma's eyes.

She held her hand out to Durendal, who took it and placed a chaste kiss on the back of it.

"You honor me my Lady." Durendal said.

"It is you who honor me Durendal, essences of the Sword of Prince Roland. Long had Lord Gryffindor dreamt of having a sword such as yourself – and now to find a Hogwarts heir worthy to hold you... It is I who am honored." Lady Hogwarts bowed slightly to Durendal.

Addressing the group as a whole Lady Hogwarts said, "First, you don't have to worry about using 'Olde English' with me Harry. I am well acquainted with how my students talk today."

"It has been many years since I have had anyone other than Sir Toppum, or some of the portraits and ghosts to actually speak to. I look forward to spending many years together. But come, let us go inside where we can be comfortable and get to know each other better."

Harry and the others started to go into the new Hogwarts when he noticed that he no longer looked like the eleven year old boy as he did in the physical world. Here his body looked more like the forty plus year old person he and Aunt Rowena had been talking about.

As if knowing what Harry was thinking, Lady Hogwarts answered; "Yes Harry, you are correct. This is not your physical body, this is how your magic and your essence look. And I must say I approve most heartily." There was a playful tone in her voice, but Harry still blushed from head to toe.

Entering the Great Hall, Harry was amazed at what he saw. Instead of showing the weather, the enchanted ceiling showed Harry the history of Hogwarts all at one time. Not just as Hogwarts was now,

but everything from the earliest construction, to the current time. It was as if he were viewing the events in a giant pensive, with new events showing up all the time. He knew that if he concentrated hard enough, he could view any event as if he was there.

Again as if reading his thoughts, Lady Hogwarts confirmed that indeed, he could view any event, that he should not be concerned with the passage of 'time' while he was here since time had no meaning in this place.

Harry, with 'Ma' and Durendal decided to first go back to the time when his parents were at Hogwarts.

'Ma' was embarrassed at how young and foolish she looked when she first came to Hogwarts.

Harry was shocked at the way his father and the other Marauder acted towards the other students at Hogwarts until he (James) took notice of Lily.

He saw how poorly Severus Snape was treated in Slytherin, and how he treated and bullied others.

He saw the friendship between Severus and Lily before he became wrapped up with being a 'good Slytherin'.

He saw the prank Sirius played on Snape that almost got him killed, and how James prevented that from happening and the resentment Snape held towards James for being in his life debt.

He saw all this and much more while he was in the 'pensive' of Hogwarts.

Coming back to himself, Harry found himself again in the great hall with Lady Hogwarts.

"This is the only true version of 'Hogwarts, a History', for nowhere else will you find exactly what happened here." She said.

"Now Harry, before you go back into the pensive, there are a couple of people who wish to talk to you."

Harry was confused for a few moments. Who else could be here?

The door to the Great Hall opened, and in came Rowena Ravenclaw in the same blue robe she wore in her painting. At her side was Salazar Slytherin, dressed all in black, his cape billowing behind him much like Professor Snape's cape did.

"Hello Harry." Rowena said, "It's good to see you could make it here."

Harry was a bit shocked when Rowena continued to come up to him and gave him a big hug much like he had done to 'Ma' when he first got here.

Salazar looked quite uncomfortable at the scene, and just cleared his throat, and said, "Ah, yes, quite."

Harry asked if they were 'alive' in the astral plane, but Rowena just shook her head in reply; "No Harry, we are not alive in the sense that this is our spirit. We are just the essences of Rowena Ravenclaw and Salazar Slytherin. Our spirits have long ago traveled on to the next great adventure – a much 'higher' plane of existence, but since we had established a connection with the astral plane while still living, that magical connection still exists between this place and the essence that remained in our portraits."

"Are there may others who have made the connection here?" Harry asked excitedly.

"Yes, there are several." This time it was Lady Hogwarts responding. "You will be meeting them all in good time, but if you find one called Mr. Bell, pay him no mind. We're not quite sure just how he made it to the astral plane but he did. It seems all he wants to do is look for 'Aliens', or some such."

Harry turned to 'Ma' with a look of hope in his eyes. "Will I get to see you and Dad here as well then?" He asked hopefully.

'Ma' hung her head in sadness. "No Harry you won't see James or Lily here. They never made the connection to the astral plane while they were still mortal. The only reason I am here now is because I am part of your magic. I'm sorry son."

'Ma' turned away from Harry to cry. She knew how much he wanted to meet his real parents – even if it was just an echo of themselves through their essences.

Harry came to 'Ma' and turned her around, giving her a big, loving hug.

"I may not be able to meet dad, but always remember that you are my mother's essence and I love you and all you represent."

'Ma' looked into Harry's eyes and saw the love and truthfulness of his statement. Feeling that love she returned Harry's hug, crying into his shoulder at the love she felt from him.

The rest of the time in the astral plane Harry spent in Hogwarts' pensieve learning as much as he could about how it was built; the wards that were around it; how they were powered; how they were controlled.

He also spent time talking to the essences of the other Founders, as well as a few others teachers and Headmasters and mistresses who had made a connection to the astral plane before leaving this mortal existence.

Harry spent a great deal of time being trained by them and learning many things about administration, law, battle strategies, and battle spells. Both Godric and Salazar were surprised that Harry already had the makings of a staff waiting for him at Ollivander's, and encouraged him to have the staff completed as quickly as possible.

Godric Gryffindor was excited to meet Durendal and acted like a little child meeting his favorite teen idol. After he settled down, he spent many hours talking with Harry and Durendal regarding the task of a Paladin in defending the weak and defeating the corrupt.

Harry saw many faces and acts of injustice that had occurred at Hogwarts over the last thousand years, and got to meet some of the worst offender (via the pensieve).

And then there was Tom Riddle.

An orphan boy raised in an abusive style much the same as Harry had spent the seven years of his life, before he found Sassy and his parent's trunk.

He saw how he used the Basilisk to kill Myrtle, and then use that death to create his first Horcrux.

It sickened him to think that a person would stoop to such depths to stay alive and felt completely dirty having just watched how it was performed.

Lady Hogwarts told Harry that she sensed Tom was back again at Hogwarts being 'hosted' by the DADA professor, Professor Quirrell. She wasn't sure what all he was doing since he spent most of his evenings away from Hogwarts, but that he was growing stronger and may soon have enough strength to use one of his Horcrux, or some other means to return to the physical world. She was sure Tom had made more than one Horcrux from hearing what had happened to his father and grandparents while he was still at school.

As Harry prepared to return to the physical realm, he was warned by both his 'Ma' and Lady Hogwarts that he could not make his experience in the astral plane known to anyone – even the Headmaster or his Head of House. Others must find their own way to her, much as he did.

Harry was told that the astral plane existed far beyond the reaches of Hogwarts. That they had limited themselves to that portion of the plane because Lady Hogwarts could not go beyond the bounds of the wards that had been set by the Founders and other Headmasters and Headmistresses.

Harry took it upon himself to see what else was out there.

He saw how the students were being taught in other wizarding schools such as Salem in the United States, Durmstrang in Bulgaria, Beauxbatons in France, and Quigley down under in Australia.

He saw the Minister of Magic meeting with Draco's father talking about a 'campaign contribution' for having a contract awarded to one of his companies.

He was pleased to see that Alice Graham, his friend from Primary School was doing well in her new Secondary School, and was making friends on her own.

He was surprised when he went to Number 4 Privet Drive that Petunia Dursley was the only one living there. It would appear that without Harry to take his abusive behavior out on, Vernon had started to take his aggression out on Petunia. Now he was a 'guest' at one of Her Majesties prisons for the next thirty years. Petunia had gotten a divorce, and Dudley was living with Aunt Marge when he came home from Smelting.

Upon returning back to Lady Hogwarts, he was told that now that he had made the journey, he could 'connect' or 'ground' his magic to Hogwarts in the astral plane, thus leave a conduit between the two planes of existence. He would be able to return there with just a thought, and Lady Hogwarts could keep in contact with Harry, 'Ma' and Durendal should the need arise.

'Ma' was thrilled about keeping in touch with Hogwarts. It meant that she could learn the latest in gossip going on in the castle, but more importantly, she could use the connection to 'copy' some of the more interesting events, potions, charms, transfiguration and spells that were stored in Hogwarts immense library.

Durendal was pleased because he could let Harry know if there was something he needed to do as a Paladin to help the others in the School.

Harry was happy just to know that there was someone else in the world that loved him unconditionally (even if she was in another plane of existence).

He was also excited that he may be able to watch out for those who were being prayed upon by bullies and the like. It caused him to wonder, "How can I get to those in need if I can not apparate within Hogwarts? And even if I could, how could I keep my actions secret? I don't want everyone knowing who I am or what I can do."

"Those are both very good questions Harry." Godric answered. "I'm sure you saw the 'transportation' charm that was used while Hogwarts was being built to move large amounts of material around? After construction, a ward that prevented anyone from

using that charm was erected. The ward that can be deactivated temporarily, but still stay in place. We will show you how to deactivate, and reactivate it, and how to control it without interference from the Headmaster."

"You also have the ability to move about like a house elf. The wards around Hogwarts won't stop you, and you can get into just about any place you want to with little more than a thought."

"As far as a disguise, I just don't know. You should have a cloak with a hood that hides your face, and use spells that hides your true height and voice. You'll just have to see what works out for you."

After finish his discussion with the Founders, and Lady Hogwarts, Harry was preparing to return back to the physical world.

"I'm going to miss you greatly Lady Hogwarts." he said while giving her one last, long hug.

"Don't worry Harry, I will always be with you while you are within the boundaries of the wards, and even when you are away from them, you will still be anchored here. You can find your way back to me any time."

Harry was glad and sad at the same time. He knew he had to return to his friends and 'family', but he would still miss being here. He had learned a great deal, but now it was time to practice and develop his core further.

With one final look back, Harry concentrated on returning back to his body. He found his 'tether' still attached to his body, and had little trouble reuniting the spirit and body.

It did take a few minutes to get use to the smaller eleven year-old body he now had. After being 'forty plus' for so long, there were some things that had to be gotten accustom to again.

Looking at the clock in the Room of Knowledge, Harry found that indeed, very little time had passed while in the astral plane. He laughed to himself to think what Hermione would do if she ever made it to Hogwarts in the astral plane. He was sure she wouldn't leave until she had read every book in Lady Hogwarts library.

Gathering up his things, Harry returned to the Gryffindor common room.

"Potter! Just where do you think you've been?"

Harry looked up to see a very worried, very excited Oliver Wood, captain of the house Quidditch team.

"Come on man, you're almost late for practice!" There was only an hour before they could take the field.

"Okay Captain," Harry said with a smile on his face. "Just let me get my things and I'll be right down."

Harry was laughing to himself seeing how one-tracked Oliver's mind was. If it didn't eat, breath, sleep, or talk about Quidditch, he just wasn't interested. It was amazing he could keep his mind on his studies.

Harry had made sure that while he was 'away' on the astral plane, he took plenty of time to study Quidditch as it had been played at Hogwarts over the last 500 years or so.

He had seen just how good some of the Seekers had been in the past, and some of the tricks and techniques they used to get out of trouble or block their opponent. Harry had been very impressed with the way Charlie Weasley could handle himself on a broom and the level of skill he displayed during his last year at Hogwarts.

Harry was determined to put some of the tricks he had seen into effect at the practice session tonight, and during the game with Slytherin.

Harry soon joined his teammates in the locker room with his Cleansweep seven thirty minutes before practice time. Not surprisingly everyone was already there dressed in their practice robes and listening to the latest plays and defenses Oliver had developed.

The twins weren't really listening. They knew their job was to hit the bludger at the opposing team, and keep it from hitting anyone on their team... especially the seeker. Harry noticed they had their

heads close to each other talking about something as intensely as Oliver talked about Quidditch.

"Harry, quickly get changed. When you do, I'll go over the new plays again for your benefit"

Everyone groaned at the prospects of listening to Oliver repeat the same things over and over again.

Before too long, they were out on the field going through the new plays. About half way through the practice Oliver called everybody down.

"Okay Harry, you've been doing pretty good with your flying over the last few week, but our first game is against Slytherin, and I KNOW they will try to take you out just as fast or faster then they will be trying to take me out.

"Now, what we are going to play is what I call 'tag the seeker'."

Harry actually felt excited if this was what he thought it would be, but he knew he had to put on a confused face – after all, this was his first year playing Quidditch (not!).

"This is what we will do," Oliver started out, "first, Fred and George will take one of the bludgers and try to 'tag' or hit you with it. Now since this is your first time, we'll use a padded bludger so it doesn't hurt you too bad when it hits you, but it will leave a mark where it hit you."

"Oy Oli, take all our fun away." One of the twins stated ('George', Harry thought).

"Ya, I'm sure Harry's a big boy." the second twin commented.

"Let's see what he's made of!" They ended together.

Oliver looked very sternly at the twins trying to channel their Head-of-House. "I'm trying to get him use to the bludgers first you clowns! Professor McGonagall would have my head – and then yours – if anything were to happen to Potter before our match with Slytherin!"

"Let's just start off slowly and see how things go."

"Alright Oli." George said.

"We'll take it easy on the little tyke... for now." Fred finished grinning evilly.

No one notice the glint of excitement in Harry's eyes. He was eager to really fly again. The time he spent with Fawkes, and in the astral plane had him 'chomping at the bit' to try some new moves out on them. There had been several seekers in the past who loved to turn the tables on the beaters.

Harry and the twins were up in the air in no time.

"Alright Harry, just try to avoid the bludger. I'm only going to let one out at a time until you get use to it okay? Oh, and try to stay within the bounds of the stadium please?"

Harry nodded his head. "That's fine Captain, let's get going."

Oliver released one of the padded bludgers and immediately Fred took dead aim at Harry.

Harry leaned to his right and let the bludger pass harmlessly by. By then, George had flown up behind Harry and closed in on him hitting the bludger again at almost point-blank range. This time Harry didn't have as much time to react, but was able to slip under the incoming missile before it got to him.

Fred had also worked his way closer to Harry and was ready for another volley at the young seeker. Harry thought it was time to put a bit of distance between himself and the twins.

As Fred drew his arm back to hit the padded iron ball, Harry pointed his broom straight up and took off as fast as he could. Fred didn't have time to redirect the bludger, and so it ended up heading straight at George.

"Oy, Fred! Who are you aiming for? Do I look like a scrawny kid on a broom?" George yelled. He had been watching Harry shoot straight up, and wasn't looking at the bludger his twin was hitting.

He was now sporting a bright red mark on his left shoulder where he had been hit.

Harry was about 500 feet above the action smiling at the twins.

"Let's get him!" George said, hitting the bludger up in the air for Fred to chase.

"I'm with you Bro!" Came the reply.

"Oy, Harry! Keep it to 20 meters above the ground if you please!" Oliver used a Sonorus charm to make himself heard by the others. "We know you can fly faster and higher than them, we need to see how you'll do in a game environment!"

Harry waved at Oliver to show that he had heard, and pointed his broom straight down, heading right for the twins.

Fred and George didn't know what to think when they saw Harry wave and turn back down. They rarely listened to Oliver during practice – they just hit the bludger as hard as they could at their target and defended their teammates. So, needless to say, they were a bit shocked when their intended 'victim' turn on his broom and head straight towards them. They found themselves peeling right and left as Harry pressed his broom to the limit heading back to the ground.

For the next fifteen minutes, Fred and George tried to get close to Harry – never mind trying to hit him with the bludger.

As the twins patience ran out they yelled down at Oliver: "Oy, Oli! Get that other bludger up here – and don't bother about the padding! I get the feeling this isn't the first time Harry's been chased by one of these things."

If they would have just thought back to Harry's 'first' broom ride at Hogwarts they would know they were right. Harry had out maneuvered a bewitched bludger for almost twenty minutes until Professor McGonagall and Hooch could trap it.

Soon Fred and George had the whole team up in the air with beater bats and a total of four bludgers trying to hit Harry. For the chasers it was an experience to see what the twins had to deal with each

match. They really didn't take many swings at Harry, they mainly had the bats up there to protect them from what the twins and Oliver were hitting.

Harry was having the time of his life! Flying up, and over, around, and through anything and everything his teammates could through at him. No one had been able to hit him yet. Just when someone thought they had him, Harry would do something amazing. Moving his broom at inconceivable angles to dodge the incoming missiles.

The twins were passed being pissed at Harry, they were in awe at the skill and pure talent he was showing in the air. This only made them try harder to hit him – just to see how good he really was.

Towards the end of the practice, Harry found himself in an unfamiliar situation. Fred and Oliver had forced him into a steep dive to avoid their bludgers, while George waited just off the ground with a bludger waiting to go. As he saw Harry dive, he took careful aim at Harry, hitting the bludger as hard as he could.

Watching in fascination, George watched as the bludger came closer and closer to Harry. He hadn't seen it yet, and it looked like this time, the seeker would get 'tagged'.

Harry sensed something was coming up at him at a great rate of speed. Mentally he cursed himself for getting too caught up with the last two bludgers that had been shot at him. Looking up, he saw George's bludger almost right on top of him. Instead of trying to dodge it this time however, Harry sat up on his broom and held his arms out at chest height as if he were forming a large letter 'C'. The bludger was 'guided' from his left hand, up his arm, around his chest, down his right arm, and sped away from him following where his right hand was pointing. Unfortunately, that was right back at George.

George's eyes were bugging out of his head when he saw the bludger heading right back at him. He tried to get out of the way, but was hit right in the bread-basket (stomach) and knocked him off his broom and on to the quidditch field. It was a good thing he wasn't very far off the ground when it happened.

The entire team was shocked at Harry's action and the resulting decking of George Weasley. Everyone immediately flew down to see if he was alright.

Harry was the first to get there, and took the bludger that George had caught, and made sure it would get away from him again. Next where the chasers who were as in aw of Harry as they were concerned for George.

Angelina was the first there to George. "Are you alright George? Say something to me! Can you hear me George?" she cried frantically.

George for his part was looking up at Harry with his eyes bugging out, having a hard time catching his breath since the bludger had made his diaphragm spasm to where he couldn't get it to move – making it hard to breath.

After a few seconds, the diaphragm started working again, and he was able to breathe again.

"Ya, I'm bloody brilliant!" He whispered hoarsely to Angelina but not taking his eyes off Harry. Harry was a little worried about George's mental health, because it sounded like he really meant he felt great, and wasn't mad at him at what had happened.

By now Fred and Oliver had secured the other bludgers so no one else would be injured and had ran over to the group to see how George was doing.

"I really didn't mean to hit you with the bludger George. It's just that I was out of position and couldn't move my weight and broom in time to avoid it. I'm really, really sorry about..."

Harry didn't get to finish his apology as George, still laying on the ground, rolled towards Harry and shouted, "THAT HAS TO BE THE MOST SPECTACULAR THING I'VE EVERY SEEN A SEEKER DO! THAT WAS BLOODY BRILLIANT!"

Harry was shocked and a little confused at George's reaction to getting hit in the gut with an iron ball.

Fred and Oliver had a similar look of aw on their face as they approached the group.

Fred didn't even look at George to see if he was alright. If he got hit, it was his fault for not liking out for himself.

"Ah, Fred? I really wasn't trying to hurt George you know don't you?" Harry asked. He was a little concerned that he may retaliate since his brother was on the ground.

"What? Oh, him? Not the first time he's been hit with a bludger because he wasn't watching what was going on." came Fred's reply.

"Oy, Fred! When was the last time ANYONE was hit with a bludger sent to them by a SEEKER dumb arse!" George was liking the attention he was getting from Angelina and had just caught the last part of Fred's statement.

"That's just it!" said Oliver with a wild gleam in his eyes. "That is the move of legends!"

"It is said that in the early 1500's the 'Hunters' as the seekers were called then, would help their team by redirecting the 'Blooder', that's what the early bludgers were called, back to their opponents and knocking them off their brooms, but until today, no one knew how it could have been done. We have all just witnessed history!"

Harry was starting to be a little concerned about the mental stability of Oliver and the Weasley twins when it came to quidditch.

"Do you think you could do it again Harry?" Oliver asked.

"I don't think that very important right now Captain. You've got a man down that looks like he may need to see Madam Pomfrey and ..."

Again Harry didn't get a chance to finish what he was saying.

"Aw, I'll be fine Harry. I'm sure Angelina here and the others will be more then willing to help heal any bruising I might have." came George's reply.

The other three male players on the team looked down to see that Angelina, Kate and Alicia already had George's robe off and his shirt undone and were in the process of 'inspecting' his upper torso very closely for bruising. He didn't seem to be minding it too much.

Oliver took Fred and Harry back out on the field with one bludger and two beater bats.

He and Fred would stand at different spots on the field and hit the bludger AT Harry. His job was to 'redirect' the bludger to Fred. Fred would then hit the bludger back at him and Harry would repeat the process by sending the bludger back to Oliver.

Of course, they wouldn't stay in one place, but at least they weren't on brooms, so if someone did get hit, they didn't have far to fall.

After twenty minutes Oliver called an end to the practice and everyone headed into the changing room to shower and get cleaned up.

By now George was right as rain, and had plans with Angelina for the next Hogsmeade weekend.

Harry, by comparison, was walking very slowly back to the changing room. His arms and chest were bruised and sore to the point that he didn't know if he would be able to use his hands ever again. He was holding his arms close to his chest so they didn't hurt quite so bad.

'I know why they don't do that anymore.' He thought to himself.

'I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT!' Harry heard 'Ma' say. 'You're even worse than James was. And that was pretty bad let me tell you!'

'Ya 'Ma', sorry about that.' Harry couldn't even find the strength to argue.

'Well what good is being a wizard if you can't use your magic to get you healed up a bit before you go in to shower. Sit down and listen.'

Harry obeyed 'Ma' and fell, more than sat down. With a great deal of difficulty he got himself up into a sitting position with his legs crossed in front of him.

'Alright,' 'Ma' began, 'Now enter a meditative state where you can visualize your whole body, but pay close attention to the areas that are injured. See all the bruising? That's where tiny blood vessels

have been damaged or broken when you let them hit you with that iron ball.'

'Ma' wasn't really feeling too sympathetic for Harry right now. 'Men and their macho games!' But she didn't want Harry to be where he couldn't function. And if left untreated, these contusions could lead to bigger problems.

'Now, feel your magic and let come up into your arm and chest area. Visualize the magic restoring the blood vessels to their proper form. Don't try to hurry. You don't want to rush this. As you get more familiar with your body, you can use this same technique to heal yourself when you are in a dual and are his with a Confringo (Blasting) curse, or something like that. I know your father used that to help him escape the Death-eaters a few time.'

Harry listened to his 'Ma' and did exactly as he was told. He could see the difference between his physical body and his magic. He was somewhat impressed with the way the body worked, and just how much abuse it could take in the name of 'fun'. He 'saw' how the blood vessels had ruptured and were seeping blood into the surrounding tissue formed a bruise.

For the first little while, he would bring his magic up and heal one capillary at a time. He also took the time to look at the tissue around the capillaries. Many of them were ruptured, broken or torn. He decided that they needed to be repaired as well.

After a time he felt confident enough to try to heal more than one thing at a time, and soon was thinking about entire areas to find them healed quickly.

Soon Harry took a deep breath and opened his eyes. He looked back down at his arms to find them completely healed. He felt his chest and noticed a lack of pain there as well.

He was surprised at how refreshed he felt after his healing.

'That's because you also repaired the surrounding muscle tissue and ligaments that had been injured when you repaired the small blood vessels.' His 'Ma' informed him.

'You know Harry; this could be a real life saver if you could do something like that all the time. You could learn how to make your muscles or bones stronger, and could recover from any injury quicker than normal. I just wonder why more witches and wizards don't think of that.'

'Because they aren't as smart as you 'Ma'. Was Harry's reply and with that he got off the grass and went to get cleaned up.

The rest of the time leading up to their first match with Slytherin was spent in much the same way.

Time for class, time to eat, time in his trunk, and time for quidditch practice.

As far as the practice part went, Oliver was determined to keep seeing if Harry could still redirect the bludger away from him, so for the last ten to twenty minutes of each practice he would have Fred and George shot bludgers at him, first on the ground, and then up in the air as well – but this time they were ready for the returning ball.

Harry was paying attention to how his body was reacting as he was repeatable hit with the iron ball, and soon could heal his body in real-time – as soon as the ball hit him. Of course, between 'Ma' and Harry, they came up with a method where he could actually anticipate the action of the ball, and send little bursts of magic to the areas that were going to be impacted.

It was like a small pocket of energy that would cushion and strengthen the muscles wherever the bludger came in contact with him. That way Harry had a little more control as to where the bludger went to, and he didn't hurt himself in the process. The magic was localized to where the other players couldn't even see it. They all just thought that Harry was one tough kid.

Harry included his friends as much as he could in spending time in his trunk in the Room of Requirements and everyone was improving in their magical skill, strength, and stamina.

He would still help the others in expanding their magical core on the new moon cycles, but the rate of improvement had slowed down considerably after the blocks had been taken off the three magical children.

Finally it was the morning of the first quidditch match. It was to be held the day before the winter break would begin. (A/N – no Halloween, no Troll, no mess with Ron and Hermione)

Harry had woken up at 5:00 AM as normal to meet his friends in the Room of Requirements for a few 'days' practice and study before going down to the Great Hall for Breakfast.

Ron and Hermione met him down in the common room and walked with him silently to meet the others.

Neville and Susan were waiting for then as they approached the tapestry of Barnabas the Barmy and his dancing trolls.

"Ready for the game today Harry?" Neville asked cheerfully, well as cheerful as one can be at this time in the morning.

"Shhh!" Ron hissed. "Are you trying to jinks him? You NEVER ask a player how their doing on a game day! It's tradition!"

Harry looked at Ron, still trying to understand just how this Gryffindor thought. "It's okay Ron, really. It's only a game. I'm sure we're more than ready to meet anything Slytherin can through at us."

"Only a game? HOW CAN YOU SAY IT'S ONLY A GAME! WE'VE GOT TO PUT THOSE SNAKES IN THEIR PLACE!" Ron exploded.

"Shhh!" everyone else said. "Do you want to wake up the whole castle?" Hermione asked coldly. "Really, boys and their games." She just shook her head as she walked through the door Harry was now holding open for everyone to go through.

Passing Harry, Ron lowered his head and said, "Sorry, I just take quidditch very seriously. Team pride and all."

"Well I guess that just goes to prove that you're related to Fred and George. I swear those two are insane when it comes to quidditch."

"Ya, well, it runs in the family. But I think Charlie was even worse then them. He was the seeker and was captain of the team the last few years he has here. I think one of the reasons he's working with

dragons now is that he couldn't get a big enough challenge just flying around with us mere mortals."

"Well if Wood's any indication of what it takes to be the captain of the quidditch team, leave me out! I mean, I love to fly and I love to play, but their... 'Devotion' to quidditch is a bit... extreme, if ya know what I mean?"

"Ya, I guess that means there may be hope for me being the quidditch captain then if you don't want it."

"Well, since I'll only be in Gryffindor for a few years, I think I'm safe in saying 'Na, it's yours'."

After their training session in the trunk, the first years made their way down to the Great Hall for breakfast.

The mood at the Gryffindor and Slytherin tables were very tense, though the Slytherin's seem to be trying to get under the Gryffindor's skin.

"So, Wood? You really goin'a use that little runt of a first year as your seeker? Talent pool must be pretty thin over in Gryffindor." Marcus Flint, captain of the Slytherin quidditch team asked. The rest of the Slytherin table laughed as if it was the funniest joke they had every heard.

Oliver looked up from his plate that he hadn't touched and replied: "Na, we just don't have to wait that extra year for them to know how to sit on a broom correctly." Now it was the Gryffindor's turn to laugh. Wood put on his best smile, even if he didn't feel like it. He knew that the Slytherin seeker, Terence Higgs, had a reputation of plowing right into the other seekers, saying they were in his way to the snitch, even when there was no snitch present, and he was at least twice as big as Harry. Wood just hoped Harry would be alright after today. But when he thought about how the practices had gone, and Harry's little 'trick' with the bludger, an honest smile came to his face.

"Hey Higgs, how are you going to feel being beaten by a first year?"

Harry had seen Higgs, and didn't need his captain stirring things up for him.

"I'll be lucky if there's anything left of him when I'm through with him." Higgs growled back.

"Almost a complete sentence Higgs! I'm impressed!" Oliver twisted the verbal knife a little more.

"We'll see how things play out on the field Wood!" Flint fired back. "Come on team; let's get ready to put down some Lions." Standing from the table, he led his team out of the Great Hall and down to the quidditch field.

Wood's realized that it was time to head down to the field. He too got up and addressed his players: "Well, come on guys, let's get ready to play and kick some snakes arse."

Before Harry knew it he was out on the field with his team mates warming up. He could look over to where the Slytherin was doing their warm up and watched as their seeker went through some of his more 'mild' blocking technique.

All too soon Madam Hooch was calling the two captains over to explain what she expected from the players, and have them shake hands.

Harry felt they might be in a little trouble when he saw Wood grab his broom with his left hand while it looked like he was trying to get some feeling back in his right hand.

The snitch and bludgers were released as the players waited on the ground. "Alright now gentlemen, ladies. On my mark! Ready?" and the whistle sounded as Madam Hooch throw the Quaffle up into the air and the match was on.

Harry was immediately in the air looking for the snitch and trying to avoid the other players. As predicted, Terence Higgs made a bee-line for Harry to try to knock him off his broom. Only four things wrong with that though:

First, Harry had years of experience with Dudley and his 'Harry Hunting'

Second, he was a better flier than Terence especially since he had been flying with Fawkes in his animagus form.

Third, Harry sensed that Higgs was coming at him and performed what looked like a somersault with his broom so that instead of being in front of the other seeker, he was now literally on top of him. Harry continued moving in a circle, so that the tail of his broom hit the Slytherin seeker in the head, causing him to push the nose of his broom down, almost crashing into the ground.

The fourth problem for Terence was the bludger hit by George Weasley that met up with the back of his head and he did crash into the ground.

Madam Hooch whistled for play to stop while she and Madam Pomfrey examined him to make sure he could still play. She warned George about hitting a seeker with a bludger, but admitted that Mr. Higgs was playing 'out of position' when he was hit. She also ignored Professor Snape's demand that both Harry and George be taken out of the game and suspended.

As play resumed, Terence started off a bit slower, but much madder. He wasn't going to let Harry get away with making him look like a fool. The rest of the Slytherin team also wanted to make sure George paid for his part of their seeker's humiliation of being put down in the first five seconds of the match.

The Slytherin beaters were spending so much time trying to target Harry and George that the rest of the team was pretty much left alone, the only problem – they couldn't tell which of the beaters was George and which was Fred.

"And Katie Bell makes another remarkable no-look pass to Angelina Johnson who makes an easy score against Miles Bletchley... again who was way out of position for that shot, bringing the score to Gryffindor eighty, Slytherin ten. Hey Higgs, if you don't hurry and find the snitch, it won't matter." Lee Jordan was enjoying calling this game very much, and after Professor Snape's display regarding Harry and George, Professor McGonagall wasn't even bothering to correct him on some of his more 'bias' comments regarding both teams and their players.

Harry and the Weasleys loved all the attention they were receiving from the other team. For Harry it was simple a matter of dodging the bludger. Having so many bludger around him, Terence couldn't get too close for fear of being hit by a bludger hit by one of his own teammates.

For the Weasleys it was almost like an early Christmas.

With all the extra hits they had taken training Harry, both were in the best beater shape of their lives. They took great pleasure in returning every bludger hit their way. About half the time they would work as a team in setting up an angle shot that would almost always break-up the Slytherin chasers play, causing them to break formation, or loose hold of the Quaffle.

"Alicia Spinnet picks up the dropped Quaffle and heads for the Slytherin goal! OH! Close call with the Slytherin captain Marcus Flint as he has to swerve away from Alicia due to a well placed bludger by Fred Weasley... or was it George... No matter, great shot mate!"

Again, silence from Professor McGonagall.

"Now the Gryffindor chasers are all together in a classic Hawkshead Attacking Formation streaking toward Bletchley. I must say, those Weasley boys have the bludgers fully under their control as they are keeping everyone away from the chasers today."

"Spinnet to Johnson to Bell, back to Johnson... She fakes the shot sending Bletchley to the upper ring, while Bell sweeps underneath and easily places the Quaffle in the lower ring! Score Gryffindor! One thirty to ten!"

Higgs was trying to get close to Harry to force him to the ground, but could never catch the smaller seeker.

Harry was getting tired of Higgs' tactics and thought he'd teach the larger player a lesson about what happens when you follow him too closely.

"It looks like the Gryffindor seeker may have seen something as young Potter goes into a steep dive towards the stands. I can't see anything from here, but look at him push his broom! Higgs is right on

his tail trying to prevent the youngest seeker century from winning his first match."

Harry wasn't really pushing his broom that hard. He had to make sure Higgs was close enough to him that he wouldn't have time to respond.

"It looks like Flint is breaking away from the other chasers to help Higgs catch Potter. Bole joins Flint and Higgs in chasing Potter down! Watch out Potter! They're out to get ya man!"

Harry wasn't paying attention to Jordan's commentary, but he could sense the other two fliers heading towards him.

With an evil grin on his face, Harry adjusts his course just enough to guarantee that all three fliers will arrive at the same place at the same time.

For their part, Flint, Higgs, and Bole didn't care about anything besides putting the little Potter brat down and were totally focused on him instead of what was around them.

Harry leveled out a little so that other players wouldn't plow into the ground – just a few feet above it.

"I can't watch! It looks like there is going to be a crash for sure... Wait! Potter pulls up after performing a perfect Wronski Feint! OH! All three Slytherin's hit in mid-air and fall to the ground! Madam Hooch calls for a suspension of play just after Spinnet scores again! One forty to ten for Gryffindor! Looks like Madam Pomfrey will have her work cut out for her today!"

Harry felt the three fliers converging on him. He adjusted his speed so Higgs could get just a little closer to him. As they were within ten feet of each other, he pulled his broom up as hard as he could and shot straight up, away from the Slytherin. The other fliers were so shocked, that they just watched him fly out of harms way. Looking back to where they were headed, the three Slytherin all yelled just before they flew into each other at full speed, crashing to the earth somewhat worse for the wear.

The Gryffindor's all gathered under their goal post waiting for the other players to be attended to.

Fred and George on the ground, laughing. The chasers were all looking at their beaters with an amused look on their face, and Oliver Wood looked like a kid on a sugar rush.

"Potter, that was bloody brilliant! You took out nearly half their team in one move including that cheater Flint! He had a numbing spell on his glove so that when we shook hands I lost all feeling in my right hand. Then he goes and tries to crush it while I can't do anything with it."

"Now when play resumes, if it does, they are going to be gunning for you even harder Harry. I want you to catch that bloody snitch so we can get out of here in one piece – hopefully."

Madam Hooch came over the Gryffindor's to let them know that play would begin again in a few minutes. Looking at Harry, she smiled slightly, and said, "Officially I must warn you Mr. Potter that you must refrain from intentionally trying to inflict bodily injury on the other players. That is misters Weasley's job. I must also tell you that the head of Slytherin is demanding your removal from the game since you are, and I quote 'a vulgar, spoiled brat, who obviously does not know how to play well with others.'."

"When I asked him what he thought those three members of his house team were trying to do, he said he didn't know what I was talking about. They were just being aggressive in trying to win the game against an inferior team. When I reminded him of the score, he indicated that it was all your fault for your need to 'showboat'."

"Unofficially I must say I haven't seen flying like that in a long time. Even Charlie Weasley would have been hard pressed to pull off a feint like that and put out three players at one time. But please, just catch the ruddy snitch so we can get in out of the cold!"

"Yes ma'am, I'll do my best. But I do plan on keeping Higgs off my tail. I really don't want to end up being rolled over by him – or Flint for that matter."

"Just do your job Potter, and I'll do mine." Madam Hooch smiled as she headed back to the center of the field with the Quaffle to restart the game.

At the other end of the field Professor Snape was berating his house team for their poor showing against Gryffindor, and especially in the fact that young Potter was still flying. He 'encouraged' them to make sure the young seeker spent some quality time in the hospital wing before the game was over. Bole and Derrick were given specific instructions to hit every bludger they could at the little welp until they hit him. If they didn't, Snape promised them that he would be personally 'very displeased' with them.

As the Slytherin approached the center of the field, all of them had a look of pure hatred in their eyes as they all looked at Harry.

"Ah, Harry, you may want to watch yourself up there. It seems that someone a little pissed off at you." said Katie with a little sense of true concern in her voice for the young seeker.

As play resumed, all the chasers joined Higgs in trying to catch, trap, or hit Harry with their brooms. 'Just like Harry Hunting with Dudley' Harry thought.

However, another problem was on the horizon.

Harry noticed that the bludgers were acting strange again. Just as Fred or George were going to hit the iron ball, it would move out of the way. Whenever the bludgers got close to Harry, they again started acting on their own as guided missiles. It was almost impossible for Harry to shake them. He had to rely on Fred or George to come up behind him and knock them off his tail.

The other thing that happened was his broom started acting strange. It no longer responded as quickly to his commands as he had expected and he found that he had to use more and more of his magic to keep it under control. 'Those bloody wankers can't even leave me alone for one minute! He thought. 'Now they've got the bludgers and my broom working against me!'

As Harry pulled close to the stands he could hear Professors McGonagall and Snape both yelling at each other concerning what was happening on the field. 'If Snape's not jinxing either the bludger or my broom, then who is?'

He was broken out of his thought when a glimmer of gold caught his eye at the base of the Slytherin goal. Ignoring everything else, Harry

turned his broom sharply headed for his quest. He wasn't aware just how much energy he had used in turning his broom. If he had, he may have noticed Professor Quirrell, who was physically lifted up in the air and thrown to the far side of the Teachers box – as if he had been connected to Harry's broom when he turned it. Professors McGonagall and Snape stopped arguing just long enough to look at the poor man before returning back to the issue at hand.

Harry felt his broom acting normally again and immediately leaned forward on it, pushing it as hard as he could. The rest of the field disappeared from his vision as he concentrated on the snitch. Closer and closer he came until it was in his hand!

"And Potter gets the snitch for one hundred and fifty points bring the final score to Gryffindor 410, Slytherin 10! The worst Slytherin defeat in will over a hundred years! What do you say now Higgs?" Lee Jordan announced with glee.

"Quite Jordan or you'll be spending the next two years in detention with me!" Professor Snape said hotly.

No one in the stands was really listening to Snape, as three fourths of the school was jumping up and down chanting 'GRYFFINDOR! GRYFFINDOR!' over and over.

The rest of the Gryffindor team had headed to the ground when they noticed that the Slytherin team seemed to have one more 'hit' to deliver to their young seeker.

Soon everyone in the stands was aware that the entire Slytherin team was in an enlarged Hawkshead attacking formation heading right for Harry. Team captain Marcus Flint was at the head with a beater bat in his hand, and a bludger running along its paddle.

The student's tried to yell and get Harry's attention before it was too late.

Harry turned around on his broom just in time to see Flint hit the bludger as hard as he could.

Without thinking Harry faced the incoming missile and released the snitch. Forming his arms in a 'C' shape he caught the bludger on the

left hand and arm, across his chest, and down his right arm and hand, redirected it back to where it came from.

Flint and the entire Slytherin team were not expecting to see the bludger heading back to them as they were now accelerating towards Harry to 'finish him off'. They had every intention to smash what ever was left of the little seeker after he had been hit by the bludger. Imagine their shock when the bludger hit Flint, knocking him back into the two fliers behind him, who in turn knocked the four fliers behind them!

Everyone stood in disbelief as the entire Slytherin team was sent falling to the earth by one eleven year old seeker!

Muffled cries could be heard as they hit the ground.

Professor Dumbledore also stood in shock as he witnessed what had happened. Finally, closing his mouth, he shook his head and said "Well, if this were seven pin bowling I would say young Mr. Potter just scored a strike!" Unfortunately he said it next to Lee Jordan who still had an open mike, so of course the entire school heard the comment.

Recovering from his stupor, Professor Dumbledore instructs the other Professors to help collect the Slytherin players and seeing them to the hospital wing.

Harry joined his teammates on the ground where he was smothered by them, then carried off the field on their shoulders.

The party that followed in the Gryffindor common room would be the story of legends for years and generations to come.

Everyone seemed to be ecstatic over the results of the game, and the play of their young seeker. That is everyone except Harry.

He knew he had done what he needed to do to win the game, but he did not wish to permanently hurt the other players – even if they were Slytherin. He was a Paladin. He was to set an example for the others. He was to help those who could not help themselves.

'Do not be too hard on yourself Master Harry.' Came Durendal's comments. 'Those student's (and I use that term loosely) were trying

to do everything in their power to cause you great bodily harm. If you had not responded as you did, I dare say they would have continued to do so until they had succeeded in that goal.'

'He's right Harry,' 'Ma' added, 'I have never seen a bigger, more blatant example of seven thugs playing that game in my life. You handled the situation as well as you could have. It should have been Madam Hooch or Professor Dumbledore that put a stop to their actions, but they didn't. Don't feel bad. You did what you had to do.'

'Thanks, both of you. I really needed to hear that. But if you don't mind, I need to get someplace quite and get all this stuff straightened up in my mind. Meet me in the astral plane. I need to talk to Lady Hogwarts.'

Harry made his way to the Room of Knowledge and sealed the entrance behind him – not that anyone else knew where the room was, but he didn't want to take any chances.

Settling himself on the floor, he closed his eyes and concentrated on his magic and the connection he had to the astral plane. He soon found himself directly outside the massive doors of his new Hogwarts where he had first met Lady Hogwarts.

Hearing a loud noise inside, Harry rushed in to the Great Hall trying to prepare himself for what every he might find.

Whatever he had expected, this was not it.

The Great Hall was set up like a small movie theater. Present were all the people he had met in his previous time here. The scene before him was one of loud laughter and even louder arguing.

Looking up Harry froze. There, on a 'big screen' was a replay of the Slytherin attack on Harry and the resulting action.

It seemed Godric was playing the scene over, and over again in very slow motion and commenting on the actions / reactions of all those involved.

Salazar was furious for two different reasons:

The actions of the Quidditch team were so open and 'exposed' that it would have been impossible for them to avoid punishment as a result of their actions and

Someone had the nerve to attack the heir of Slytherin! What made it worse was that it was the Slytherin students themselves!

"This is totally unacceptable! Totally unacceptable! I demand to have the Head of House to be tarred and feathered, placed on a rail and run out of school at once!" Salazar was beside himself in his rage.

"He has taught them nothing of what it means to be Slytherin! Where is the subtlety? Where is the planning? Where is the distraction or the plausible deniability of the other students?"

"But what makes it worst of all is that they tried to do that against my heir! UNACCEPTABLE! TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE!"

Lady Hogwarts noticed Harry in the doorway looking at what was going on, and came over to where he was standing. She still carried herself with grace and power, but now, instead of a robe, she was dressed far more informally in what looked like jeans and a tee-shirt. He noticed she was carrying a bag of popcorn when she offered him a bite.

"That was one of the most entertaining Quidditch matches we've seen up here for quite some time, but I'm afraid if Godric doesn't quit replaying that last play Salazar may take exception to the whole thing and challenge him to a duel again."

"Would they really get into a duel over something as trivial as a Quidditch match? After all, it's only a game."

Harry and Lady Hogwarts headed out of the Great Hall and out the main doors. She had looped her arm through Harry's as they started to walk aimlessly around the school.

"To you it may only be a game Harry, to Godric and Salazar it's about house pride and which is better than which. This is the first time since Charlie Weasley seeker in his house that Godric has had something to cheer about with regards to Quidditch, and before that it was many, many years. I'm afraid Godric may be 'savoring' the

moment just a little too much." She said with a small smile, while eating some more popcorn.

"But that's not why you came here now is it? You are troubled that your actions were not that of a Paladin aren't you Harry?"

Harry blushed that he seemed to be that transparent in his motives.

"I did not want to hurt them, but at the same time I did need to defend myself, and I hope, teach them a lesson about being bullies. Was I wrong in doing that?"

"I can't answer that Harry, but let me ask you this: What if that last bludger had be aimed at someone else, say, Katie, Angelina, or Alicia. What would you have done then?"

"If I could, I would block the bludger any way I could to protect the girls. The Weasleys and Oliver I know can take care of themselves, but the girls..." Harry felt the anger rise within him to think of someone trying to do that to one of 'his' Chasers.

"Well, if it is alright to protect one of them, why would it be any different in protecting yourself?"

Harry stopped walking and looked up at Lady Hogwarts with a stunned expression on his face. He had never considered the fact that the two cases would be the same.

"In the end it may all come down to a matter of intent Harry. What were your intentions at the time you sent the bludger back to Marcus? Was your intent to cause him harm, or were you defending yourself?"

"My primary objective was to defend myself with a secondary objective to stop the attack as quickly as possible with as few people getting hurt."

"Then I would say you accomplished both of those objectives with a single act. And even though the whole team will spend some time in the hospital, there was no permanent harm done. Now, if they will learn from their lesson... I'm not too sure that will happen without some follow-up on your part, but that is not for me to answer... I think Salazar has some things he wishes to impress upon you."

Harry looked up and saw a very upset Salazar Slytherin coming down the path they were on mumbling something to himself. Looking up and seeing the couple, he paused his rantings and took a calming breath.

"Forgive me Lady Hogwarts but I have several things to speak to my heir about."

"Of course Lord Slytherin." Turning to Harry she said, "I'll be inside when you're finished. Please come and see me before you leave." Then she leaned over and gave him a small kiss on the cheek before releasing his arm and returning to the Castle.

Harry blushed as he watched her leave. Without even thinking, he brought his hand up and touched his cheek where she had kissed it.

"You are very good for her Harry. I haven't seen her this happy in over eight hundred year, when the last of the direct heirs left Hogwarts." Taking his eyes off the figure of the retreating form, Salazar looked directly into Harry's eyes and commanded. "Young heir, walk with me."

Turning to face Salazar retraced his steps with Harry falling in behind.

"My heir, we have a problem. First, let me say that I am not mad or upset with you for the way you played in today's match. You were doing what you would have done regardless what team you would have been playing on. Just why did it have to be Gryffindor." This last part was said mainly to himself.

"It would appear that the current members of my house and its Head have no idea what it means to be Slytherin. They misinterpret ambition as to mean win at any cost and cunning as to being willing to be brutes to those less powerful than yourself."

"They are being lead down a path that will place them in the camp of the pretend heir, there to be used, abused, and made little more than stepping stones to that abominations will and whim. You must remind them of the true meaning what it is to be Slytherin. That to be ambitious is to have goals that seem to be beyond your grasp. To be cunning is to have careful, well thought-out plans as to how you can

help others, who can in turn help you in reaching those goals, not to walk on the corpse and broken bodies of these who could help you. When many hands work together, great things can be done. It is done faster and better if those hands are 'willing' and not 'compelled'."

"Harry, I am charging you to start reclaiming my house."

Harry was shocked at the charge and challenge Salazar was placing before him.

"I know this will not be easy, and I also know that there will be several things blocking your way – an incompetent Headmaster, a dark, jealous Head of House, and my own misrepresented history and persona."

Sal hung his head and shook it sadly. "I just wish history would not confuse me with my great-great grandson Salazar and the reputation he gained while trying to get revenge for those who had wronged me."

"You will have many challenges to overcome, but I know you'll be able to do it. It's my hope that by the time you graduate from Hogwarts as a member of the House of Slytherin you will have been able to meet, and complete this challenge."

Harry's mind was racing trying to comprehend the task and challenge issued to him. Whom could he approach in that house that would listen to him? What would he say or do? When would he be able to start? Where could he talk to the students where they could feel safe and feel confident that Harry knew what he was talking about? How would he reach out the other Slytherin? Why should he try?

Sal smiled as he saw the shocked look on Harry's face. Nevertheless, he smiled even more when he could see Harry staring off into nothing – his eyes moving back and forth quickly – as if you could almost see the questions form in his mind.

"I see you are truly Roe's heir first and foremost. A lesser persons would have immediately thrown up their hands saying it was an impossibility to do what I have ask, but you are already trying to

figure out how to get it done. I'm proud of you son!" He said clasping his hand on Harry's shoulder.

Harry just looked up at him with a bewildered look on his face.

"But Uncle Sal, I don't know even where to start or what to say!" he confessed.

"Now Harry, just think. You already know that there are seven Slytherin's in the hospital wing you wanted to visit anyway. Now you have something to talk to them about besides that damnable game of Quidditch."

Harry blinked at Sal's comments when he realized that he was correct. He did have seven members of that house who were basically a 'captive' audience if Madam Pomfrey was true to form. She wouldn't release any of the young snakes until they were completely mended.

"Thanks uncle Sal, you've given a good place to start, but I still don't know how I can accomplish such a huge task."

"Remember Harry: ambition and cunning." Sal said with a gleam in his eye.

After returning to the real Hogwarts, Harry used the transportation charm to take him down to the hospital ward without anyone seeing him. As he entered, he could see all seven of the Slytherin Quidditch team lying in their beds, mending.

Madam Pomfrey raised an eyebrow when she saw Harry enter, however there was something about his demeanor that told her he was not here to gloat or make trouble with her charges.

"Mr. Potter." She said. "I'm surprised to see you here after such an intense contest. May I assume you are not planning to make any trouble while you are here?"

"I just wanted to see how everyone was doing. I didn't mean to get everybody hurt."

Again, she raised an eyebrow. This was not what she had expected from the son of James Potter or of a Gryffindor. Then she

remembered, James had not raised Harry, and he would only be in Gryffindor for two years before moving on to another house.

"Very well then, I will let you talk to them for a few minutes, but if I hear any roughhousing..." she let the threat hang in the air.

"If you do Madam Pomfrey, I won't be the one starting it." Harry replied.

"Very well, you have thirty minutes till curfew." With that, she left the ward, and entered into her office – with the door open.

Harry walked into the hospital ward. As he passed the Matron's open door, he wandlessly and wordlessly placed a privacy barrier on it so she would not be 'interrupted' by the discussion he was going to have with the Slytherin.

Moving in a bit closer he positioned himself near the middle of the group so he could address all the Slytherin at one time.

"So Potter, come to gloat?" Marcus Flint started. He seemed to be acting as spokesman for the group since he was the team captain.

"I don't know what you did or how you did it but you're going to pay for it when we get out of here you can count on that."

"I didn't come here to gloat or cause trouble with you or any member of your team Flint. I really did come down here to make sure you were all going to be alright, and to let you know what a big disappointment you are to the House of Slytherin and its true standards."

All the team members were shocked at Harry's declaration.

"What would you know about the true standards of the house of Slytherin?" Flint demanded.

"I know about these things because when I defeated Voldemort (the children shuttered) I became the heir of Slytherin by conquest. Remember, I was not sorted into Gryffindor. I was sorted into all of the Hogwarts houses, including Slytherin. That is where I will be my seventh year. That will be the house I will graduate from Hogwarts."

"I still don't believe you Potter! You're just so full of yourself! There's no way you could be the heir of Slytherin. Everybody knows that the Dark Lord is his heir! And when he returns – you'll get what's coming to you, and we'll all be glad to help!" Flint pointed around to each of the players who, in turn, nodded their heads in agreement.

Harry looked at the Slytherin in their beds agreeing with what Flint was saying. On the outside, he had a small, eerie smile on his face, but on the inside, he was a mess of nerves and was more than a little unsure of himself.

'Show them your ring, my lord.' Durendal said. 'Pure-bloods like these understand the importance of such things as holding the ring of Slytherin.'

Concentrating on making the Slytherin ring visible, Harry held up his right hand showing the students.

"You know what this is, and you know what it means. I could not wear the ring of Slytherin if I were not his true heir."

All of the students were shocked. They recognized the ring at once and could feel its power, but they could not bring themselves to believe it.

"N..N..No! It must be some kind of trick!" Flint had gone pale at the sight of the ring, but still refused to believe.

'Harry? How about that spell you used in the chamber to help Myrtle understand parseltongue? If you cast it on them, and then spoke to them in parseltongue? Wouldn't that help convince them?' 'Ma' asked.

'Well it's worth a shot.' Harry thought back.

Taking his wand out, Harry made a circular motion and cast the spell 'Serpetis Exaudio' in parseltongue.

Hissing at the Slytherin Harry said: 'Know now that I am the true heir of Salazar Slytherin. I have been to his vault and claimed his ring and his portrait. I have spoken to him and have been taught at his hand. It is he who has given me a charge to reclaim his House and to set it back on the right track. It is he who has told me regarding

the true characteristics of those who are worth to be sorted into his great House. And it is he who has told me that you are all currently on the path to failure and destruction.'

'The true characteristics of the House of Slytherin are ambition and cunning. Not winning at any cost and bullying your way through life. I have been charged to set the House aright, and I now charge you as Lord of the House to aid me in this cause.'

'When you return to your house, look up the history of the pretend heir, Lord Voldemort. Start by looking at the history of one Tom Marvolo Riddle, a half-blood. He is the one who claims to be the heir.'

'Search to see what it really means to be ambitious and cunning and see how you measure up. You will not bully those who are weaker than you, but will see how they can be used in meeting your goals and plans.'

'I forbid you from making my presences as of yet, but you will set the groundwork that will make the acceptance of my claim easier for the others. Do you understand?'

"Yes Lord." all seven voices replied.

'As a further sign, I will not remove this spell from you. You will be able to understand parseltongue, but you will not be able to speak it. Is that understood?'

"Yes Lord." came the reply again.

"Now," Harry switched back to normal English. "Believe me when I say I want you all to get better and have a happy holiday."

"Ah... H.. Happy hol.. holiday Potter." Flint stuttered back.

Harry just nodded and turned to leave. Stopping at the matron's door, he removed the privacy charm, and announced that he was heading out and wished her a happy holiday as well.

The trip home was rather uneventful.

Ron was still trying to talking to any and everybody about the Quidditch match while Hermione, Neville, and Susan were all making plans as to what they would be getting for their friends for Christmas.

Harry chose not to join in on the discussions but think about the challenge and advice given to him by the founders.

The first challenge he had received was with regards to the staff – or the parts of a staff that Mr. Ollivander had been storing for the last three and a half years. He (Mr. Ollivander) had indicated that he still needed one important ingredient before he could start constructing the staff. Harry's blood.

Harry thought about the parts of the staff.

Wood – The Heart of the Lignum vitae tree – or Tree of Life – Same wood as Merlin's

Gems – Green Emerald, Yellow Tiger Eye, Red Ruby, and Blue Sapphire – the primary colors of all the Hogwarts Houses. What these gems were for, Harry was not sure. Maybe it did represent the different Houses.

Focus Stone – A large, flawless diamond

Eight different core elements – Four that represented the Hogwarts Houses again:

Dried Basilisk eye suspended in Basilisk venom

Grand Empirical Griffin heart string wrapped around its wing feather

A full set of Ravens claws

Fur from an alpha male badger.

And Four that represented the natural Earth elements:

Blood, gathered from the Liver of a Sylph – indicating the element of air.

The black bile gathered from the gall bladder of an earth gnome – indicating the element earth.

The yellow bile from the gall bladder of a Salamander – indicating the element fire.

Phlegm from a water nymph – indicating the element water

All Mr. Ollivander was waiting on was a vial of Harry's blood.

Harry had written Mr. Ollivander telling him that he would like him to start working on his staff, and ask how much blood he would need.

He had written back stating that he would need just under a half a liter's worth of blood, and asked if Harry could collect the blood after he had performed the 'exporrigio magus umbilicus' (Expand the Magical center) charm on the next new moon. This saddened Harry, because he missed the December 6th date this month, which meant Harry would have to wait until January 4th, 1992 to extract the blood – just one days before returning back to Hogwarts. Harry doubted very much if Ollivander could have the staff finished in that amount of time, but maybe he could have Sirius or Remus bring it to him when it was ready – or he could always flame-travel to Mr. Ollivander's shop and pick it up in the evening.

Indeed, Mr. Ollivander had written back and indicated that it would as much as three lunar cycles to complete the preparation and carving on the staff, and have all the core elements 'acclimate' to each other before placing them in the staff.

When Harry asked how much creating the staff would cost, Mr. Ollivander simple stated that the honor of creating such a piece of art was compensation enough.

Pulling into the station Harry saw Remus and Sirius watching the train as if looking for him and decided to have some fun.

"Hey guys? Why don't we see if we can play a little joke on Remus and Sirius out there? This can also be a test to see if you've learned anything regarding stealth and avoiding detection."

The rest of the occupants of the car smiled slyly and agreed to prank Harry's guardians.

"For each of you that can get close enough to prank Remus or Sirius, I'll pay you ten Gallons a prank! But remember, they use to prank the teachers at Hogwarts."

Ron didn't care about that last bit. All he heard was 'ten Gallons a prank!'. He had spent the better part of eleven years being the guinea pig for his older twin brothers tricks and pranks, and he couldn't wait to let someone else be the butt of the jokes.

"You better be good for the money Potter because I'm going to hit them so hard and fast that they won't know what happened!" Ron bragged as he started to fight his way off the train.

Harry and the others tried to yell at him to get him to stop, but he kept on pressing the older students to get out of his way.

Harry sighed and shook his head. Hermione asked a question to the group in general: "He's going to get killed isn't he?"

Harry let out a little laugh shook his head again. "Ya he is. I mean, they won't kill, kill him. Just make it so it will take a special kind of mother to love him... But... if we hurry, maybe we can use the distraction to our benefit." With that the other students watched as Harry slowly faded away until only a smile was left – and then it was gone as well.

Hermione, Neville, and Susan all looked at each other and then back to where Harry had been. Smiling evilly, they too disillusioned themselves and headed for the platform.

"I am so sorry Sirius, Remus, I just don't know what could have come over Ron!" Molly Weasley was doing her best to look sternly at Ron while not laughing at the current condition he, Sirius, and Remus were in.

"I know he had written to me about meeting with young Harry, and I'm sure Harry must have told him something about the two of you, but why he should try to attack the two of you on the platform like that is beyond me! I'll make sure he gets a good talking to when we get him home!"

"Come Ron! I think you've made a big enough mess of things for one day, and you better have a good explanation for the way you are behaving young man!"

Mrs. Weasley reached down and grabbed the leash connected to the collar around Ron – who now looked more like a small red-haired Baboon. From the top of his pointy hair head, to his large canine in him mouth, to his rosy red ... backside and tail.

Sirius and Remus watched him leave, still not looking any happier.

That may be because Remus was currently sporting potted flower boxes for shoes, a purple velvet robe with a wide white fur trim, with a matching purple pimp hat and cane, and a large, round, red bulbous nose.

Sirius wasn't much better. Six inch high leaded shoes, torn and ratty pants and shirt with a worn dull gray robe. However, it also looked like he had a 'bolt' inserted into both sides of his neck, and forehead looked elongated with a scar across the front, topped with short, dark stubble for hair. Oh, did we mention his skin color was gray-green, and it looked like he had been sown together?

"Okay, Harry, you can show yourself now the Weasley's have left." Remus stated.

"Mmmm." Sirius added.

Harry and his classmates appeared in front of the guardians with satisfying smiles on their faces.

"MMMmm?" Sirius asked.

"Uncle Remus, Uncle Sirius! How good to see you again!" As Harry came up and gave his guardians a big hug. He sounded far too happy considering that he was currently sporting blue skin and looked more like a large Smurf.

"May I introduce Ms. Hermione Granger – Gryffindor, Ms. Susan Bones – Hufflepuff, and Mr. Neville Longbottom – also Hufflepuff. I believe you have already met Mr. Ron Weasley – Gryffindor?"

The rest of Harry's group waved back at the pair of guardians. They had not escaped the mayhem unscathed – though not nearly as bad as these two.

Neville had a pair of cauliflowers for ears.

Hermione's hair looked like it was a match to Sirius – or rather – the bride of Frankenstein.

Susan was sporting a darling pair of Butterflies for eyebrows.

"Longbottom? Frank and Alice's boy?" Remus asked.

Neville hung his head and answered "Ya."

Remus put his hand on Neville's shoulder and waited until he was looking him in the eye.

"You have nothing to be ashamed of Neville. Frank and Alice are two of the finest people it has ever been my pleasure to meet. Hang in there Nev, I'm sure something positive will happen someday. Just don't give up hope."

"Thanks, I hope so..."

Remus waved his wand and restored his ears back to normal.

"Thanks again. That's much better."

"Now, Ms. Bones? As in niece of our illustrious and fearless Head of the Department of Magical Law Enforcement?"

Susan blushed at Remus' statement but still shyly nodded her head yes.

"So you're the one that must have hit Sirius with that 'mute' spell. Good work by the way".

"Auntie's always saying that if you can take the voice away from most wizards you've taken away one of their biggest weapons."

"Well I would say that you Aunt know what she's talking about, wouldn't you Sirius?" Remus asked his friend with a raised eyebrow.

"MMMM! MMMMMMM!" Sirius shook his head, pointing to his voice box.

"Oh! Sorry about that! Finite Incantatem!"

"Ahhhh, that's much better thank you! You keep listening to your Aunt! She knows what she's talking about!" Sirius added. He felt so much better now that he could talk again, and waving his wand restored her eyebrows.

Sirius then looked at the last member of the group and raised a monstrous eyebrow. "I don't believe I am familiar with the Granger family. Are you a new magical user?"

Hermione's eyes opened wide as for the first time since meeting Professor McGonagall, she met another adult in the wizarding world that accepted her as a user of magic and not some abomination!

"Yes! Yes I am! My parents are both dentists and we were so surprised when Professor McGonagall showed up with my letter! I can't believe a completely new world exists hidden from the muggles so completely!"

Harry smiled at Hermione's attitude regarding magic and this new world she had been thrust into. He decided to interrupt her before she could get up a full head of steam.

"Ah, so Hermione, which effect did you manage to do?"

"Oh! I did the Frankenstein outfit. Dad just loves that movie. 'Go with the classics' he always says."

Both Sirius and Remus raised their eyebrows on that statement. "That is very advanced for a first year." Remus stated.

"Hermione is the smartest girl in our class at Hogwarts this year." Harry announced.

She blushed. "That may be true Harry, but no one can match you for power and knowledge. It just makes me want to try harder."

Harry changed the subject by asking Neville and Susan what they had done to the remaining Marauders.

Susan had just done the 'mute' spell on Sirius, while Neville had done the flower pot shoes on Remus. That meant Harry was responsible for Remus' 'pimping' outfit and his clown's nose.

Harry gave them both Neville and Susan ten Gallons for their prank spells, while Hermione received ninety Gallons for the 'Frankenstein' transfiguration on Sirius.

"Now Harry, would you mind telling us about that other one – Weasley? One of Arthur and Molly's kids I believe?"

Harry smiled while the other children tried to stifle their laughs.

"Ah... well it seems Ron is a true Gryffindor, and only heard about the reward for being able to prank you and forgot about stealth or planning before rushing into battle as it were. We just took advantage of the distraction he caused. But hey... aren't you the one that keeps on talking about 'CONSTANT VIGILANCE!'?"

"No, that would be Ol' Mad Eye Moody, one of my instructors in the Aurors Academy." Sirius said. "But we will talk of this when we get home."

With a few waves of their wands, everyone was restored back to their proper shape, form, and color.

Bowing to Harry's friends, Remus said, "It was a pleasure to meet all of you. I'm glad to see that our tutoring of Harry in the finer skills of magic has not gone completely to waste."

They watched as the other three students found their parents – or guardians in Neville's and Susan's case, and headed through the barrier into the muggle world.

Once everyone was gone, Sirius put up a privacy ward and looked at Harry.

"Would you mind giving us a ride home Harry? I believe the Benu would do well for this." Sirius stated as if ordering a car for the evening out of his fleet of cars.

Harry changed into his Heron Phoenix, and flame-traveled everyone back to Lupin Manor.

Upon arrival, Harry knew he was in trouble.

"Mr. Padfoot is very distressed in finding the person of Mr. Padfoot, and the person of Mr. Moony the subject of a viscous prank attack when no warning or preconditions had been established as to the duration or object of said prank from Mr. Keeper."

"Mr. Moony is also distressed at the total lack of respect Mr. Keeper showed in employing untrained witches and wizards in his efforts to prank Messr. Padfoot and Moony and would like to inquire as to just what Mr. Keeper was thinking?"

'Ops, I forgot about this'. "Ahhh... Mr. Keeper regrets any ahh... disrespect for failing to follow the ahh ... rules of engagement on the persons of Messr. Pad ahh Padfoot and Moony? And seeks their forgiveness and understanding on the part of Mr. Keeper."

"Mr. Keeper desires more instruction? Ahh from Messr. Padfoot and Moony."

"Mr. Padfoot accepts Mr. Keeper apology and asks if Mr. Moony does the same?"

"Mr. Moony thanks Mr. Padfoot for asking, and yes, Mr. Moony does accept Mr. Keepers apology and thinks that for the next 24 hours a prank war should be engaged in with the intent to see how many charms, jinx, hexes and non-lethal traps can befall the persons of Messr. Padfoot, Moony and Keeper. During this time three – one hour time limits will be set aside for the consumption of meals in which time and place no charms, hexes, or traps may be employed. Further, the personal resting areas of Messr. Padfoot, Moony and Keeper are off limits – unless Messr. Padfoot, Moony or Keeper attempt to avoid the contest by remaining in said personal resting area longer then is required."

"Further, Messr. Padfoot and Keeper are forbidden to use any of their animagus forms to avoid or set charms, jinx, hexes or traps. Said contest to begin in five minutes. Agreed?"

"Mr. Padfoot accepts Mr. Moony excellent proposal and looks forward to teaching Messr. Moony and Keeper a thing or two regarding pranking."

Harry hung his head knowing he had no choice but to accept, and no chance against the two 'seasoned' Marauders.

"Mr. Keeper also accepts Mr. Moony's proposal, and looks forward to learning much in the next 24 hours."

"Mr. Padfoot suggests Mr. Keeper take his things up to his room and then come down for the first meal break."

Harry nodded his head and took his shrunken trunk up to his room.

Remus and Sirius headed into the kitchen for tea before dinner when they heard a commotion up in Harry's room. It sounded a great deal like a bucket of water falling on someone's head!

"PADFOOT! MOONY! YOU'RE BOTH DEAD MEN!"

Sirius looked down at his watch. "Has it been five minutes already? My time sure does fly when you're having fun."

"Yes it does Padfoot, yes it does."

"When you mentioned 'personal resting areas' you were referring to just the bed now weren't you?"

"Why yes Padfoot, I do believe I was... or in Harry's case, the first twelve inches above the mattress."

"Oh good, then I didn't set the cloths removing jinx too low on the bed."

Needless to say, Harry learned a great deal over the winter break. But Remus and Sirius found out that he could dish it out as well as he could take it.

For Harry, he became much more in tune with his mage-sight. He now was aware of the faintest trace of magic that was on an object, surface, or location. That is the way he found the tracking charms that had been placed on him – four of them in total. One each from

Dumbledore, Snape, Sirius and Remus. He quickly learned how to remove those.

He also got to the point where he could 'detach' the magic and move it to ... well lets say in front of his Uncle's bedroom doors. There were times Remus and Sirius were completely dumbfounded as to how a trap had been moved from one place to another.

As January 4th came closer, Harry explained to his guardians regarding Mr. Ollivander's request for his blood to finish his staff.

"You've got to be very careful regarding this Harry. The Ministry bans just about all forms of magic that requires the blood of the witch or wizard. There are many rites and rituals where one wizard can control another through the use of their blood freely given."

"What if I make Mr. Ollivander give an oath that he will only use the blood given to him for the construction of the staff only and nothing else?"

"That should work. The Ollivander family has always been one of THE MOST trusted family in the wizarding world. They almost have to be seeing as how nearly every wizard in the world – well, Great Britain anyway get their wand from them. They deserve some level of trust."

"But Harry, don't you also have that sword? Can't it tell the intents of the person?"

"Yes it can Uncle Remus, I'll ask Mr. Ollivander if he would mind having Durendal have a look at him."

"Sirius? What have you found out about me owning a staff and a wand? Am I going to get into trouble with the Ministry or Dumbledore by possessing one?"

"There shouldn't be any problem at all with that. Staff construction is so rare that the Ministry just views them as a museum piece or relic. There are so few wizards that could power a staff, let alone control it that they just don't seem to care about it."

"However, I would still be careful with it. Don't let it be generally known that you have a staff. Use your trunk and that special room

you found in Hogwarts to practice and train. I'm sure if anyone can give you points and tips as to how to use your staff it would be Ollivander."

"Above all, DON'T let Albus get his hands on it! Really, that shouldn't be too much of a problem since most staffs are 'tuned' to the wizard they were constructed for. But that doesn't mean he won't try to break or destroy it if he can. A staff belonging to one so young would be like putting a neon sign over your head saying 'Powerful Boy-Who-Lived Here Attack me now before I'm stronger than you'."

At 23:10 GMT on January 4th, Harry performed his core and mind expansion rituals.

By 02:30 GMT on January 5th, he was finished and flame-traveled to Mr. Ollivander's shop in Diagon Alley.

He found the old craftsman in his work area with all the curtains closed. Harry traveled to a work area where he would not be seen before changing back to his regular form.

"Thank you for seeing me at such an early hour sir. I know how valuable your time is." Harry stated in a calm voice.

Now it was Ollivander's time to jump. For years and years, he had gotten almost a perverse sense of pleasure scaring the first-year students as they came into his shop for the first time. He found that even their parents were still unnerved as he seemed to appear out of nowhere to inspect the new student of magic.

This had been the first time in many, many years that someone had been able to do the same to him.

Harry smiled at the surprised look on his face, until he noticed the wand that was now also facing him, with a near-lethal spell ready to be shot at him.

"Now you know how the rest of us feel when we come in here." Harry said with a smirk, using this time to also show Mr. Ollivander the scar on his forehead.

"Mr. Potter! But where... How... The wards...!"

"I'm sorry if I startled you sir, but I had to have a safe and secure way to get here without anyone - Ministry or School – knowing I was here. I trust you will continue to keep my secrets sir?"

"Of course Mr. Potter! Ollivander's have been keeping secrets for many thousands of years, and will for many thousands more."

"But I must ask you Mr. Potter; just how did you get into my workshop?"

"The wards that are around this story are older and, if I may say so, more powerful than even those you will find at Hogwarts. No one who is not specifically keyed to the wards CAN NOT get in – yet here you are."

"You did not apparate or use a portkey. All the door and windows are still secured, yet here you are!"

"The only being that has ever been able to get past those wards has been Fawkes... and since he is bound to the school, he could have brought you if you had asked..." Ollivander saw the blank look in Harry's face. "But it would appear that did not occur to you so the only other option is..." He looked at Harry for a few seconds before his eyes opened wide. "Oh sweet Merlin! How many Mr. Potter?"

Harry was confused by the question for a moment until he realized that Mr. Ollivander had been reading aura longer than anyone else alive and would have had to develop that skill to a very fine degree in order to match the wand to the wizard. He must be reading his aura and seeing his animagus ability, but not too clearly.

Harry summoned Durendal to him and pointed it directly at the wand maker.

"An oath Mr. Ollivander. It is not that I don't trust you, but I must know my secrets are safe with you."

Ollivander's mind drifted back to the first time he had seen the green eyed 'Boy-who-lived' and how he had demanded an oath from him at that time and the things he had learned. Now three and a half years later he stood at another crossroad with the same young man. But he had changed. His magic was not only more powerful, but

also more mature and controlled. Almost like a well-seasoned Aurors. Yet, he was still worthy to use the sword Durendal.

"As you wish Mr. Potter. It is an oath I give freely."

"I, Oliver Seth Ollivander, do swear on my magic and on my life that I will not disclose the secrets learned today from Mr. Potter, also known as Lord-Baron Potter or Lord Ravenclaw at this time or any other as long as he is worthy to carry the Sword of Power – Sword of Might - Durendal. So mote it be."

"So mote it be." Harry said as he accepted the oath.

'He is most sincere young master. As long as you are worthy to hold me, he will not betray you.'

'Thank you Durendal. It's nice to know I have one more friend I can trust.'

"Now if you will, Mr. Potter, how many forms do you have?"

"I have four that I have found so far, a Hippocampus, Bennu, Hippogriff, and Chimera."

"Fascinating! Do you think I could get a scale, feather, or hair sample from each animal? I promise it will only be used for the staff, but I feel it would be very complementary to the other core elements that you already have – though I do admit that it would be fascinating to see the type of wand each of those cores would make."

"I will give you a sample of each for the staff now, but I would prefer not to give another sample for the wands until I know it would be safe to do so."

"Very well, as you wish then."

"Now, Mr. Potter, I require an oath from you. I am about to disclose secrets that have been held in my family only for many millennia. You will be the first to hear and see these secrets."

"You honor me sir."

"I, Harry James Potter, do swear on my magic and on my life that I will never disclose the family secrets of the Ollivander's as long as they stay on the side of light, and as long as an Ollivander should remain alive. So mote it be."

"Yes, so mote it be. Very well said Mr. Potter, very well said."

"Please, call me Harry."

"Very well Harry. Now, let us get started."

Lucky for them both it was a Sunday, so few people would think it strange for Mr. Ollivander's store to be closed. Unlucky for Harry, however, was the fact that he only had until 11:00 this morning before he had to be at King's Cross station to catch the Hogwarts Express back to school!

Over the next several hours, Mr. Ollivander and Harry worked on preparing the core elements by gathering Harry's blood and samples of his different animagus forms and separating them in to four rune covered bowls.

Then, Mr. Ollivander has Harry join the elemental core items into the corresponding bowl with his elemental animagus forms and had them start absorbing the magic and blood that were in each bowl. He explained to Harry that this would take at least one lunar month, and the stronger the magic in the blood, the longer it would take.

He also encouraged Harry to infuse as much of his magic as he could into each bowl, stating that it would make the staff even more powerful.

This reminded Harry of the power transfer ritual his mother and father would do on him, and how he use to draw power from the blood runes that surrounded Number Four Privet Drive.

He then explained to Harry how he was going to prepare the staff.

He would start by inscribing a Druid prayer around the staff thanking the tree and the forces of nature for the gift of the wood. He then would inscribe runes on the staff for protection, control, and to prevent others from taking or using the staff. Harry asked if that would make it impossible for him to work on the wood, but Mr.

Ollivander told him that that particular rune would not become active until after all the pieces of the staff was put together, and Harry bound the staff to himself.

He also explained to Harry how each of the gem stones – except the focus stone – would be melted down by a process that had been lost to the wizarding world for many, many centuries and how the liquid gems would be used to form a pattern on the staff that would make it more efficient in bring the power of the core to the focus stone and help protect the staff from spell damage. The patterns for each channel cut on the staff would have to be determined by using Arithmancy with the magical characteristics of the wood and each of the gem stones. Mr. Ollivander stated that this formula had been developed by his many-times removed forebears and was one of the most closely held secrets in his craft. It was also one of the most dangerous, since if you made a mistake in your calculations or in the placements of the cuts on the staff – the results could be disastrous!

With just a few minutes to spare Harry finished his part in preparing the staff and the core elements and flame-traveled to a predetermined spot on platform nine and three quarters where Sirius and Remus would have a privacy barrier already up and in place.

"Boy pup, you look exhausted!" Sirius said.

"Thanks. I'd hate to feel this bad for nothing." came Harry's reply. "I never realized just how complicated, and how much work it is to do what Mr. Ollivander does all day."

"He told you his secrets?" Remus asked excitedly.

"Sorry Remus, but I'm sworn not to discuss what happened while I was in his workshop. I hope you understand?"

"Of course Harry, I understand completely. You should feel privileged that he would share any of that with you."

"I do Remus, believe me I do."

Just then, the whistle blew on the Hogwarts Express indicating it was time to leave.

Harry quickly gave his two guardians a hug and ran to the train. "Don't worry about me; I'll make sure I get some sleep on the train." Harry said as he hopped on the last passenger car as the train was pulling out of the station. He waved to Remus and Sirius from the train, and watched as they waved back until they were out of sight.

Coming into the passenger car proper, Harry didn't have far to look to find his friends. They were in the last compartment in the last car.

Opening the door Harry asked his group of friends, "Hey there. Room for one more?"

"Harry James Potter where have you been!" Hermione started in on him. "We were waiting on the platform for nearly thirty minutes for you! Don't you know you almost missed the train? I would have thought you of all people would know how important it is to get here on time!"

"I missed you too Hermione." Harry said with a smile in his voice.

Hermione blushed at the statement and looked properly chastened.

"Harry what happened to you? It looks like you haven't slept in days."

"Thanks for noticing Neville, the last few days have been rather busy and tiring for me." Harry responded without further explanation.

"Harry mate, thanks for the Christmas gift, and the letter to Mum explaining what happened on the platform when we come home. I think I would still be cleaning the Burrow if not for that."

"Your welcome Ron, but really, we wouldn't have been able to do half the things we did to those two if it weren't for your suicide attack at the time. But next time remember to have a plan before you try something like that. If that had been a real battle situation, I don't think you would have come out of that alive."

Ron for his part just stared at Harry until he suddenly looked like someone had turned a light on and he could see what he had done. A shocked look came on his face when he realized was Harry was saying and just shook his head. "Ya mate, thanks for telling me. Next time, make sure I have a plan before I do something like that."

"So Harry, my aunt tells me that one of your guardians has been looking into old law and such over the break. Anything you'd like to tell us about?"

Harry gave Susan a serious look. He was going to have to talk to Sirius about who else might know what he was looking into regarding being in possession of both a wand and a staff.

"No Susan, there is nothing to tell. But enough about that. I'm beat, and we have a eight hour train ride in front of us. Who's up for a few days training (and sleeping for me) in my trunk?"

Upon receiving a positive response from everyone in the cabin, Harry sealed the compartment, brought out his trunk and expanded it, and led his friends down into chamber eight.

"Sassy?"

"Yes Harry?" Sassy said coming into view.

"Would you please prepare chamber eight for ten days of training? But first, I've got to get some rest."

"Of course Harry. But you know you wouldn't have to do this if you would get to bed on time." Sassy teased.

"That's just what I was going to say." Said Hermione nodding her head.

"Et tu Sassy?"

She just smiled and disappeared.

The friends spent the next four hours (outside time – five days trunk time) resting, training, and in Ron's case, getting the rust off his brain so he would be ready for the next semester at Hogwarts.

End Chapter 26.

A/N – For those who are wondering, Mr. Art Bell is a former radio host in the United States who spent many evenings talking about the occult, paranormal activity, and pseudo-science. I only heard his

'Coast-to-Coast' show a few times, but it seemed like each time, he and his guest would be talking about their travels in the astral plane and the people they met there. I understand he sometimes guest-host on a late night show. All I can say is that he is a very intelligent person who is much easier to listen to than some of the current radio talk show hosts.

For those who think my 'Hogwarts' sounds like the 'Hogwarts' in Brent Braten's masterpiece 'Harry Potter, Heir of Gryffindor', (story # 1717016), sorry, but it's not.

In that story, Harry not only meets his parents, but his children as well (among others)! He just isn't too sure who the mother of his children is yet. Please read it if you haven't. It really will be worth your while (and it will give me more time to finish this story).

With the exception of a bit of a let-down in the end of the second to last chapter, the book is just a great read. (Come on Brent, you know Harry could have finished off Voldemort – or banished him to a 'void' after he spent all that time with his 'Maturo Auctus').

Also, if anyone knows where I can find the last few chapters (after chapter 29) to RossWrock's epic work 'Harry Potter and the Power of Time' I would be forever grateful.

rdgale2000

Chapter 27 – What do the rest of them think?

A/N – This chapter takes place as the students are returning to Hogwarts from their winter vacation. It is meant to be a 'review' of some of the changes that have occurred to them over the first three months of the school year.

Try to picture each of the students in their train compartment, thinking about how their lives have changed since meeting Harry. They are all sitting there, thinking, and ignoring everyone else while they are off in their own little dream world.

This is meant to be a 'catch-up' chapter for some of the other key players in the story that I haven't done a good job of including.

Some of the insights may be more complete than others. Please enjoy and remember... You get what you pay for.

Now on to the story:

Hermione. Reflections on the first half a school year in the magical world:

During the trip back to Hogwarts from the winter break, Hermione sat at her favorite desk with a forgotten book on it, thinking about how much her life had change in these past few months.

She still couldn't believe just how lucky she had been to find THE Harry Potter that first day on the train! Of course she'd read all about him in some of the 'additional' reading material she had picked up at Diagon Alley like 'Modern Magical History' and 'The Rise and Fall of the Dark Arts' and 'Great Wizarding Events of the Twentieth Century'.

She was very upset and even a little disappointed when Harry told her that all the stories in those books were just someone opinion of what happened; That no one really knew what had happened when Harry met Voldemort the first time all those years ago. She had argued with him many times, but his convictions were set. One of these times he pointed out the contradictions and inconsistencies between the stories. All he asked was "How can they all be correct when they disagree and contradict each other? If one is right, which one? And how would you know?" (A/N 1,000 points to anyone who can identify the basis of that argument)

She absentmindedly turned a page in the book out of habit.

It was the first time Hermione had taken the time to realize that not everything written in a book was the gospel truth.

"But why would anyone write something that wasn't true?" She asked.

"I can think of several reasons off the top of my head," Harry offered, "One reason may be that they want to intentionally spread 'misinformation' around to confuse the public or an enemy. But I would think the more likely reason is that it seems just about anything with my name on it is guaranteed to generate interest in the product and increase sales."

"What do you mean by that Harry?"

"It is almost guaranteed to make them money regardless of what they write about me – even if it is false."

Hermione had started being more critical in the things she read these days. The information in what she read had to pass several test first:

First, did it sound correct?

Next, did it agree with what she 'knew' or had read in the past. On more than one occasion she found herself revising what she thought she knew to something that was 'more correct principle' (as she liked to say it. Heaven help us all if she were 'wrong' about something).

Last, how did it make her feel inside? Did it make her feel like she was growing inside? Was her knowledge expanding? Would she be better able to help those around her with this information? Would she be able to keep herself safer with this information?

It had been a great advantage to be with Harry and the others. From them she could learn about the magical world at-large. Right now, for the most part, she was appalled by the bigotry and backwards thinking of the wizarding world in general, and Great Britain in particular.

From Harry – and his trunk – and Library in said trunk – she had access to some of the most authoritative book on any subject she was studying. She loved being able to take the spell and charms they were learning in school and finding out the history and background on it. It seemed that by doing this it was much easier doing the spells the next time they went to class.

She still can't believe how much more 'powerful' she was now. She had gone from a magnitudo de magica (size of magical core) reading of 485 on her first day to now over 1,150! That put her will within the 'Standard Power Witch' range. If she continued at this rate, she could be within the 'Low Sorcerer (Sorceress) level by the time she left Hogwarts!

She knew her number could have been higher, but since most of her time in Chamber 8 of Harry's trunk was spent reading from that wonderful library that Harry had, she had not put in as much work as Neville or Susan, but at least she put in more time than Ron.

The more time she spend with Harry and the others, the more she learned, and the greater her desire to learn more. She knows that she has been given an unparalleled opportunity to learn magic – REAL magic.

She still got mad at Harry when he disappeared on her from time to time. It wasn't so much that she misses Harry, but she missed Harry's trunk and the library inside where she can learn magic in a way few can.

She notices how much she (and the others) had all grown closer together (for the most part – thank you very much Ron). The increase of power also seemed to be affecting there physical bodies as well. Hermione also noticed that she and the rest of 'Harry's crew' were among the tallest students in the first-year. She could understand that for herself, since she was one of the oldest students in their year, but both Harry and Neville were born in late July – but now they could easily pass for a second or third year student.

Hermione had always been a mature young lady for her age, but these days she felt even more confident and mature. She found it much easier talking to the professors and older students in the

school and wondered how the rest of her life would be in the wizarding world as Harry Potter's friend.

Ron – A pure-blood with a problem

Ron was a little more reluctant to enter chamber 8 than the rest of his 'friends'. He felt like he had a lifetime of attitude and behavior to overcome, and more than a few personal problems.

All of Ron's problems were issues he brought upon himself

Growing up he had seen his bigger brothers leave home to attend Hogwarts and distinguish themselves in their own unique way.

Bill had been tops in the school in charms and leadership. The leadership led him to be selected as a prefect, and later as head-boy. By excelling in charms, he was able to land a prestigious job after Hogwarts as a curse-breaker for the goblins at Gringotts. He was powerful, brave, decisive and self-confident – he had to be if he was going to 'breakaway' from Mum. Just what did Bill mean when he said that Mum was 'over-bearing' and 'suffocating'? I mean, Mum's hugs can be a little powerful, but not quite 'suffocating'.

Bill was everything Ron wanted to be. But even if he was all that – someone would always look at him and say; 'Oh Ron, You're just like Bill.' Not exactly what an 11 year old young 'man' wants to hear.

Then there was Charles. Maybe not as tall as Bill, but packed with hard muscles and quick reflexes. Traits that landed him on the House Quidditch team in his second year as the best seeker Gryffindor had seen in many, many years.

Starting with his third year at Hogwarts, his love for the game and drive to be the best seeker ever, led to his selection as Captain of the House Quidditch team until he graduated four years later. A move that was sure to upset a few of the older players you would think, but everyone knew, that between Charles' love of the game and his skill as a seeker, it was the correct choice.

Gryffindor enjoyed four years of Quidditch cup championship. Something that had not been done by any house for the last 450 years!

After graduation, the Cannons came trying to get Charles to fly for them. The team coaches and trainers promised him a great career on the field and many more 'adventures' off the field. Those last words were said when Molly was busy in the kitchen or otherwise occupied.

Ron remembers sitting in the front room of the Burrow or on a stump out by the family's Gerry-rigged Quidditch field listening to the coaches and trainers stories listening with wide eyes and active imagination. Surely there could be no finer team in the entire league the Chudley Cannons!

Nevertheless, Charles had other plans. Professor Gribble-Plank had made it her life mission to talk to him about Dragons and Dragon reserves in far-away places. It may not be as glamorous as being a seeker on a third level international quidditch team, but the thought of flying with Dragons thrilled him even more than seeing the golden flash of a snitch on the other side of the Quidditch patch.

So what was the point of Ron doing well in Quidditch? Even if he was a great player and captain of the team, he would always have someone looking at him and saying: 'Oh Ron, You're just like Charles'. Not exactly what an 11 year old young 'man' wants to hear.

Next came Perfect Prefect Percy.

Ron had seen that even from a very young age that Percy had mapped out where he was going in life from what he would accomplish in all areas of his life. From his per-Hogwarts learning; to the classes he would take each year in Hogwarts and the grades he would get in each class (nothing below an 'O' would be acceptable to him); to working in the Ministry as an assistant to the under secretary to the Minister; to his ultimate goal of becoming the youngest Minister of Magic at the young age of 53. Almost 10 years sooner than anyone else in history!

Of course Ron didn't see the battle Percy had with the Sorting Hat that wanted to put him in Slytherin given his ambition and drive to a single goal. Percy finally even won that battle and was sorted into Gryffindor as his brothers before him. Now he was in a position where he could put his plans into place.

All the reports that came back to the Burrow regarding Percy were always 'perfect'. He had 'perfect' attendance in all his classes. All of his homework that he handed in was 'perfect'. He was THE ONLY non-Slytherin to get a passing mark in ALL his potions assignments. Of course, he only got this because he started bottling two samples of each potion he made. One was for Professor Snape, the second was to give to Headmaster Dumbledore to show that he had brewed the potion correctly and the Headmaster could 'encourage' Snape to judge the potion on a more equal basis. Even Percy didn't know how many discussions the Head of Slytherin and the Headmaster met to see how a person who was so obviously Slytherin had been 'miss-sorted' into Gryffindor.

By the time Ron had gotten to school, Percy was right where he expected to be – a 5th year prefect with a clear path to being the Head-boy in two more years.

So even if Ron worked as hard as he could and got perfect scores with perfect attendance in all his classes, there would always be someone there looking at him and saying: 'Oh Ron, You're just like Percy'. Not exactly what an 11 year old young 'man' wants to hear.

If Percy had taken the 'high-road' away from Ron, the twins had taken the 'low road' away from him as well.

The twins held the record for most detention and days missed from class in each of the years they attended. They were known throughout the school for their pranks and practical jokes.

It was said that each teacher cringed anytime the twin's shadows darkened their classroom doorway.

It wasn't that they weren't smart, in many regards they were even smarter than any of their previous siblings. It's just that they decided to put their considerable talents to other uses – making people laugh.

Of course, it didn't help Ron when they told him that he would have to wrestle a Troll to see what House he was to be sorted into; or that they kept on implying that the school was going to run out of food at any moment because of the opening feast. He also didn't know how it seemed they always knew where he was at or how they could get from one room to another quicker than him or his friends, and he knew they didn't pass him along the way.

Ron liked a good joke as much (if not more) than the next person. But he really, really didn't want someone to look at him and say: 'Oh Ron, you're just like the twins!' Not exactly what an 11 year old young 'man' wants to hear.

That left his younger sister Ginny. The only girl in the Weasley direct line for several generations. She would be coming to Hogwarts the very next year – enough said. He really, really didn't want someone to look at him and say: 'Oh Ron, you're just like your sister!' Not exactly what an 11 year old young 'man' wants to hear.

That brought Ron's thoughts to the people he was currently sharing a compartment (well, trunk in the compartment anyway) with on the way back to Hogwarts.

Of course first was Harry Potter. I mean he's THE-BOY-WHO-LIVED for goodness sake. He had heard stories about him for as long as he could remember. Now he got to meet him IN PERSON! It was both a great thrill and a great disappointment at the same time.

The thrill part came in just meeting him and seeing that he really did have the scar on his forehead where Lord V... V... He-who-must-be-named tried to kill him.

The disappointing part came in the fact that, just to look at him, Harry Potter wasn't that different looking then any of the other first-year boys that he had seen. Shouldn't there be a bright blinking sign over his head saying 'Boy-Who-Lived here. Look upon my greatness' or something. Then there was all this reading and training and stuff.

Ron was very grateful that Harry had removed the bind from off his core so that his power rating went from a modest 240 to a respectable 480 after. I mean that is only about 20 points below where you need to be to be able to perform most magic that a normal wizard needs to do throughout his life. Now to have a power rating 920 half way through the first year of school! If what Harry and Hermione keep saying that will put him close to a power rating of 2,800 by the time he graduate! That's more powerful then most witches and wizard, at least here in Britain.

But what was he going to do with that power? If he went the ministry, he would always be compared to his dad or Percy. If he went into Quidditch he would be compared with Charles. There was no way he would work for the Goblins – they just gave him the creeps.

Maybe he could keep on working in a greenhouse with Neville like the one Harry had suggested. I mean it had made enough money to get him a wand of his own now, but for some reason he didn't see Neville being content with staying in a greenhouse. Not after the changes that he had seen during the first three months of the school year.

Everyone had heard about the fate of the Longbottom's. His parents in the long-term care ward at St. Mungo's. Rumor had it that their son Neville was a squab. Maybe he was before coming to Hogwarts, but with the removal of the two binds on his magical core, and the amount of time Harry was spending with him, Ron felt that Neville might now be the second most powerful wizard in their year. No question who was the most powerful. Ron didn't think there was a charm, spell, jinx or curse known to the wizarding world that Harry couldn't perform... Well, maybe some of the Dark curses... but that was about it.

When Harry announced that Neville was his 'god-brother' Ron had been shocked. Now he could see how close the two young men had really gotten. It was one of the main sources of jealousy he felt against both Harry and Neville. His only saving grace was that Neville was in Hufflepuff and not Gryffindor. If he had been in Gryffindor, he didn't know how he would react. He still had a long way to go on with the training disks his family had received from Gringotts. He forgot that Harry was only going to be in Gryffindor for two years, and then he would be going on to Hufflepuff where he would be spending even more time with Neville and Susan.

The girls on the other hand weren't too bad.

It was clear that Susan liked Neville a great deal, and was the only one of the four 'additions' that worked harder than Neville – as if she had something to prove to him.

Susan's aunt WAS the director of the Aurors in the DMLE, so maybe she was trying to impress her. But Ron really felt that she was trying to impress Neville.

That left him to think about the remaining person in the compartment – Hermione Granger. A new magical user with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. But really, why bother. Didn't she know there were no muggle-born witches that were department heads in the Ministry of Magic? Oh, there may be one or two who worked in the lower-level positions or on part-time assignment with the Aurors or Unspeakables on special cases, but nothing permanent. About the only thing she could look forward to was possible teaching in some small school where the students and parents were so poor that they didn't care about the genealogy of their teachers.

But Ron had to admit to himself, there was something special about her. Every time he was near her, he got frustrated so easily. He had a hard time finding the right words to say, and often spoke without thinking. He also found it even harder time concentrating when he was around girls in general and Hermione in particular.

His biggest problem with her was that she always had to have the last word, and she always had to be right. Ron found himself arguing with her just so he could prove her wrong about something, but had never been successful.

The only person that seemed to know how to handle Hermione was Harry. He would listen to her politely, and then respond. I guess it did help that Harry could show her – in a tome or scroll where her logic was lacking.

Why couldn't he (Ron) do that when he talked to her?

At the beginning of the year Ron didn't see what the big deal was regarding teaching girls or having them train with them in chamber 8. His expectations of a witch were that they grew up, get married, had children, and took care of the house. Why should Susan and Hermione for that matter work so hard? Now, after three months with Harry, and with the help of the Goblins training disks, that attitude was beginning to change.

He knew from his Gryffindor training disks that there was something off in his view of muggle-born magic users in general, and women in particular, but he hadn't taken the time to stay with the disks. It was just too unpleasant and brought into question his thoughts and

beliefs regarding the importance of blood in the wizarding world, and the role of women in it.

Yes, after all was said and done, Ron was one mixed-up, messed-up wizard.

Neville – from lump of clay to towering powerhouse.

Neville was currently in the dueling portion of chamber 8 with Susan testing themselves against the targets and dummies Harry had let them use. It felt great to have a wand that responded to your power, and not one you had to force to work with you.

He just could not believe that changes that he had experienced during the first three months of schooling at Hogwarts.

To find out on his very first day that not only did Harry Potter want to meet him, but also he went so far as to let him know that he was his 'god-brother'! Neville didn't think his day could get any better than that.

But wait, there's more! As the pitch man says.

Not only does Harry come out and tell Neville he's his 'god-brother', he also tell him that there have been, not one, but two binds placed on his core and that if he wants', Harry could take them off of him and asks Neville if he wants that done.

What would you say in that case? Not only 'YES', but 'heck YES' (A/N I'm trying to cut down on my swearing).

For as long as Neville could remember, he didn't feel part of the magical world. He couldn't feel the power coming from a cauldron of a slowly simmering potion, or the power from an adult as they cast a 'Reparo' on a pane of glass he had broken in his grans' greenhouse because he wasn't looking where he was going. In fact, the only time he remembered any magic was when his uncle dropped him out of a three-story window, and instead of falling to his death, he bounced when he hit the ground!

Neville had been more than a little surprised when his Hogwarts letter came. He was grateful to see it, but also a little frightened that

he would end up being the laughing stock of his class, and an embarrassment to his family name.

Now, with the binds off his core, he felt completely different. It seemed that for the first time he could see the world as it really was. Colors were brighter, his thinking was clearer. He felt more alive than he had ever been. But the biggest difference now was that he could feel magic! Not only his own magic, but the magic in others as well.

He could feel the power radiating off Harry when he cast a spell. He could feel the intent of the magic; whether it was good or evil.

For the first time in his life, when his friends or professors talked about how to do a spell, he understood what they meant. It was almost as if his magic understood what was being said and couldn't wait to try it.

He still couldn't believe the difference he felt as the binds came off him.

The first bind was like someone had turned a light on in the room, but the second bind was like someone had started a bonfire in his soul that couldn't be put out!

The reading, studying and training that he was allowed to do with Harry and the others in the Room of Requirements and Harry's trunk had just been fantastic! He now had the time and people to come to understand the concepts that the professors were talking about in class. He was not only able to complete his homework assignments, but also understand the concepts behind what they were studying. Hermione had been a great help in that regard.

The other person Neville found himself drawing strength from surprisingly was Susan.

She had been one of the first to recognize the change in him and had been encouraging him the whole time. It didn't hurt that they had both been sorted into Hufflepuff. He found it was easy to make an excuse to spend time with her when they were in the commons area of their House. It was also a welcome surprise to see how good she was in Herbology. Neville had always prided himself in his knowledge and skill he had developed in his Grans greenhouse. He

found in Susan a person with just as much knowledge, skill and devotion on the subject.

He was always surprised when Susan would give him a little hug, even the occasional kiss on the cheek.

He remembered when he returned home at the beginning of the winter break. His Gran couldn't believe the change that had come over him! He had grown so much since he had been gone that she even tested him to see if a doppelganger had taken his place.

After he had told his Gran what Harry had found, and corrected (he hadn't told her about the training in the trunk) she was shocked and demanded a meeting with the young man and his guardians.

That was a memory he could use to practice his 'Patronus' spell with!

Flashback

Upon arriving home at the Longbottom Manor, Madam Augusta Longbottom turned on Neville and demanded to know what had caused the change in the boy. Neville stood straight and tall, looking his Gran eye-to-eye and told about meeting Harry on the train to Hogwarts. How Harry had called him a 'god-brother' and offered his friendship to him after just meeting him.

He told her of the oath he had taken to protect Harry's secrets, and the general outline of what had transpired after that.

Madam Longbottom was not all that pleased that Neville had made an oath that she could not get around. She tried to intimidate him as she had done many times before while he was growing up. But this was a different Neville. This Neville would not be intimidated. He let his Gran know that he did love and respect her, but that his word and oath were more important, especially one given to his 'god-brother'. He told her that if she wanted that information, she would have to ask Harry herself.

So Madam Longbottom sent a harshly worded owl to Harry informing him that she expected to see him and his guardian on Boxing Day at four o'clock for High Tea, and would be expected to explain his actions with regards to her grandson.

Neville had warned Harry that his Gran may be a little 'upset' with what had happened, but he shouldn't worry about it... too much...

When Harry received the owl, he smiled, and wondered what her reaction would be when he brought Sirius with him.

Promptly at 3:55 PM the floo at Longbottom Manor came to life as Harry stumbled out in his finest 'Head-of-House' robes. Fortunately for him, Neville was there to catch him. "Thanks Nev, I glad it's just you here. I would have hated for your Gran to see my entrance like that."

"No problem, bro." Neville said while laughing. "I can't believe the great 'Boy-Who-Lived' has so much trouble with the floo. I'm glad there's at least one thing that I'm better then you at."

"Quiet you or I'll take your Christmas present and go home," Replied Harry.

Both boys moved out just in time for the floo to come alive again. Harry turned to see Sirius step out as leisurely as if he were taking a Sunday stroll.

"How do you do that? You've just got to show me! Please?" Harry plead with his godfather.

"So still have some uses for the old man after all now do ya Harry? I'll have to see if I can fit some time in for you. You do know how busy my social schedule is. Newly freed Head of an ancient house with money and good looks?"

"Ya, Padfoot, I know exactly how busy your 'social schedule' is... it nonexistent! Zero! Zip! Nada! If I hadn't dragged you out here you still would be held up at Lupin Manor trying to 'adjust' to being free by consuming another bottle of Ogden's finest. I'm just trying to get you out of your rut and give you a chance to really get out. But I'm serious – don't say it – when I tell you that I really do need your help with some of this magical forms of travel like the floo. I'm just pants at it, and you do it so smooth even after not doing it for ten years."

Harry knew he was taking a chance here. Sirius really hadn't been out of Remus' home much since being released from Azkaban. He

just didn't know how to act anymore. It was like he stopped growing during his time in the wizards prison. If anything, he had reverted back to his time at Hogwarts! Sometimes Harry wondered who was more 'mature'?

On the one hand, he viewed himself as a fun-loving Marauder, always looking for a joke or a way to prank an unsuspecting victim. On the other hand, he was a 30 something year old head of one of the oldest and feared family's in the wizarding world with all the responsibilities and headaches that brings.

Harry's little tirade caught him a bit of guard. He didn't expect the words to hit him quite so hard. The problem was, he really didn't know how to act right now. Harry acted much more mature then he did most of the time, and the fact of the matter was, Harry had been the 'Head' of his family longer than he had – and he acted like it.

Harry could see that Sirius was taking his little talk harder than he had meant it, and had to do something quickly before he slipped back into his shell.

"Come on Padfoot, I really need you right now and you need to keep your wits about you. You're about to attend High Tea with one of the Grand Dames of the wizarding world – Madam Augusta Longbottom. You remember, Frank's mum. Just think of all the stories Frank used to tell you and my dad about her. Remember all those 'Daughters of the Goblin Revolution' meeting he would tell you about. This is the 'big time' Padfoot! If you can survive a High Tea with Madam Longbottom word will get out that you're really 'back' and well on the road to a truly spectacular social life."

For his part Neville was a bit shocked at the conversation between Harry and the person that until recently was thought of being even more evil the Bellatrix Lestrange. He was quit surprised at how fragile this person seemed to be, but then, it had only been three months since he had been released from Azkaban.

Sirius for his part was coming out of his self-pity. He thought about the friendship he had with Frank and Alice and a genuine smile showed on his face.

Looking up, Sirius noticed Neville for the first time, and the smile got even bigger.

"Forgive me Lord Longbottom. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Lord Sirius Orion Black, head of the House of Black. I offer you my hand and strength in any worthy endeavor you chose to undertake, and my thanks for being such a good friend to Harry in my absents."

Neville was shocks at the word offered by this man he had just met. Coming out of his stupor, he stepped forward and accepted Sirius' hand. "Lord Black, welcome to my humble home. I accept your hand in friendship and cooperation, and pledge to you my hand and strength in all righteous endeavors as well."

A flash of magic sealed the offers between the two houses. Neville was a little surprised. This had been the first time he had done anything as the acting head on the house of Longbottom.

"It really is great to have both of you here. I hope you had a chance to read that book regarding High Tea with a member of The Daughters of the Goblin Revolution. Gran's gone and pulled out all the stops. I really think she's trying to intimidate both of you, but mostly Harry. Now come on, Tea is being served in the formal sitting room."

Harry and Sirius follow Neville down the hallway to the formal sitting room. As the Grandfather clock in the hall struck the hour, Neville opened the door and introduced their guests to his Grandmother. Sirius went first, and greeted Augusta as an old friend, and took her hand as a proper Lord / Lady would exchange.

For her part Madam Longbottom was taken back a bit by the familiarity Lord Black had shown towards her and wanted to show her displeasure, but one look at that ruggedly handsome face and smile and she just couldn't.

When Neville announced 'Lord Harry James Potter, head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter', Madam Longbottom's left eyebrow raised to show the disbelief at her grandson's statement. But as Harry entered the room she found herself catching her breath.

Here was a young man the same age as her grandson, wearing the formal robes as a head-of-house. What impressed and shocked her was the aura of power that was coming off the young man, the

piercing green eyes that looked like they were judging your soul. She saw the sword he wore on his side – a custom that not many heads of house continued today.

Shaking her head, she schooled her facial features – after all, this was the young man she was mad at.

Harry greeted her as an equal. "Madam Longbottom, it is a great pleasure to finally meet you. I have had the pleasure of being with Neville during my time at Hogwarts. I can now see why my father wrote that it was always good when a Longbottom was by your side."

Madam Longbottom was shocked by the young lord's declaration. "It has been a family tradition for as long as our history has been kept. Where there was a Potter, there was always a Longbottom. It is good to see that some things do not change with time." Augusta's eyes became unfocused for a few moments as she thought about how Frank and James were always getting into trouble as they grew up. She had to be VERY firm with him with regards to not becoming the 'fifth' marauder during his time at Hogwarts. It was the only time they had spent much time apart. Still, after Hogwarts Frank and James both went became Aurors, and later partners.

Coming back to the present, she quickly schooled her feeling back into the hard matriarch that had been maintaining the House of Longbottom until her grandson could assume his responsibilities upon reaching his majority.

She turned a hard eye to Harry and gave him the once-over as if to ask 'what right do you have to wear those robes?'

Harry, sensing her question volunteered the answer. "As the last living Potter it is my right and duty to wear these robes, and perform the functions of the head of my house. "

Augusta just raised her eyes and head slightly as if to acknowledge the statement, but not the fact that it just might be true.

"I am sure there are many things we can discuss but now is not the time. I believe you know the others present?"

Harry looked around and found that in addition to Sirius and himself, Susan Bones was there with her Aunt, Madam Bones. Sirius had made his way over to Amelia, while Neville was visiting with Susan.

"Of course Madam, shall we?" Harry offered his hand to help Madam Longbottom up out of her chair.

Ignoring his hand, Madam Longbottom got up and went to where the elves had set the tea and scones for High Tea.

What followed could best be described as a olde custom best left in some old, dusty history book. Everything seemed to be scripted down to who was served first; how much cream and sugar was to be placed in each cup; how the tea was poured; how many times you stir the tea – with which spoon; what order the scones and pastries were taken and eaten; even what subject were appropriate to talk on while tea was being served.

The men were expected to stand each (and every) time any of the women stood, entered, or exited the room. Sirius had to be reminded to stand by a house elf sticking him in the butt with a pin when he didn't stand fast enough when Susan got up to get another scone – a breach of protocol, but not as big as Sirius' mistake.

Harry and Neville had talked about what would probable happen and so had just resigned themselves to the torment inflected by Madam Longbottom.

After tea had been served, and the service trays taken away, Madam Longbottom turned to Sirius and Harry to grill them on the real reason she had brought them over on Boxing Day.

"Lord Black, we are very pleased that you have been returned to us from that despicable Azkaban to take your rightful place in the wizarding world, however, I must protest the actions taken by your ward with regards to my grandsons health! Do you have anything to say for yourself?"

"You must excuse me Madam Longbottom. It has been more difficult coming back into the wizarding world than I thought it would be. Since Harry was eight years old, he has been cared for by Goblin appointed guardians and caregivers. I'm still trying to get to know him myself. You must realize that this is just the second time I've

really had any time to spend with Harry. The first time was the night he was able to capture that traitor Peter and secure my release from prison."

"Why don't you ask him yourself? He is an emancipated minor after all, and I hear sometime acts quite mature for his age?"

Sirius looked like he'd been forced to eat dragon dung. He felt like he was abandoning Harry to the wolves. But he really didn't know how to act in this type of situations.

"Well Mr. Potter, (She felt he was far too young to be considered a true 'Lord') Just what do you think give you the right to experiment on my grandson in releasing his core? Don't you know that he could have been kill through your carelessness?"

The smile on Harry's face faded quickly as he realized that a gauntlet had been thrown down, and it was up to him to either pick it up and accept the challenge that had been issued, or ignore it.

Looking at Madam Longbottom he know that she would only respond him and his position if she were given a display of power relating to his claim. He had to show her that he had earned the right to be the head of house by deeds, and not because he was the last Potter alive.

His eyes grew cold as they began to glow with power. Bringing up his aura, he raised his hand and took the illusion off the Potter ring to show that he was in fact in position of it and that it had accepted him as its true heir.

"Madam Longbottom, you will show me the respect that is due me as the legal head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter!"

"You claim to know the customs and traditions of the Ancient and Noble Houses, so you know that I could not wear this ring if I were not the true and rightful heir and by so doing being declared a legal adult. You will address me a Lord Potter as is my right! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?" The last part of the message was assisted with a little bit of power put behind it.

Shocked Madam Longbottom nodded her head and offered an apology.

On the other side of the room were an equally shocked Madam Bones and Lord Black. Sirius knew Harry was powerful, but had never seen anything like this before. In fact, the only person that he knew that to show an aura like that was Headmaster Dumbledore – but never that strong.

Madam Bones for her part was shocked both by the coldness of Madam Longbottom's question, but even more so by young Lord Potter's reply. 'Just how powerful is this young man'? She thought to herself. She knew that young Lord Potter was the only person under seventeen that the DMLE did not have a power reading on. And try as she might, she couldn't get one either.

After a few moments, Harry pulled in his aura, and schooled his face into a more pleasant appearance.

He then told all those present how he had discovered his heritage at the age of eight, and that as he read his parents journals, the fact that her daughter-in-law, Alice, was Harry's godmother, and that Lily was Neville's so as far as he was concerned they were 'god-brothers'.

He told them how he 'read' how his parent had found out about the power block that had been placed on all magical children if their initial core reading was above '40', and how is 'Ma' had plead with him to find and tell the Longbottom's. They of course that 'Ma' referred to Lily in her journals.

He told of the spells found in his families glamors to show: if a block was binding a persons magic; how to remove the block; and find the size of a person's magical core.

"Then it was you who provided that information to St. Mungo's and the Minister?" Madam Bones broke in. "Why didn't you let everyone know? Most families would be compensated by the Ministry for the use of a family charm like those! They have the potential to be real life savers if 'You-Know-Who' ever comes back!"

"Madam Bones, I didn't want the notoriety or need the money from the Ministry. All I want is to have a normal childhood."

Neville, Susan, and Sirius all had to cover their collective laugh at that comment.

"Madam Longbottom, I felt I had a responsibility to Neville, as a god-brother, to remove his bindings as quickly as possible. He had spent the last eleven years with that handicap. I couldn't let it go for one more day."

"Then what about me and Ron Harry?" Susan asked. Why did you remove ours as well as Neville's?" Looking at her aunt, but talking to Harry, "am I a god-sister or something?"

Harry let out a small laugh while Madam Bones shook her head 'no'. "No, sorry Susan, you're not a 'god-sister'. At least, not that I know of. But both you and Ron were there in the same compartment as Neville. It really wouldn't have been fair for me to remove the blocks from Neville and not you now would it? I guess if you want, maybe we can ask you Aunt for a big time-turner and go back and put the blocks back on you – what do you think?"

"No thanks Harry! I like my life just like it is now thank you very much! Just asking." Susan sputtered.

Turning back to the Longbottom matriarch Harry continued. "Did Neville ever tell you that he had not one, but two blocks on his core?"

Madam Longbottom shook her head no. Neville just blushed a bright red.

"Yes, two blocks! One from the Mediwitch when he was born, and the second by a very powerful witch or wizard that didn't want to have Neville reach his full potential as a wizard."

"Who?" Madam Longbottom asked.

"I have my suspicions, but just think for a minute. Who did Neville meet while he was still young that might want to keep him weak?"

Madam Longbottom face paled as she thought about the possible, then suddenly looked up into Harry eyes.

"That bastard!" (A/N – so much for not swearing) She said heatedly. "That dirty, rotten, stinking bastard! Wasn't it enough that I lost my son and daughter-in-law but that he had to almost ruins my grandson's life as well?"

Neville came and sat by his Grans' side and put a comforting arm around her frail shoulders.

"Now do you understand why Harry did what he did? I was barely above a squib when Harry met me on the train. When he removed the Mediwitch's bind my power almost tripled, and when he removed the second, it doubled again. I'm currently already at the power range of a regular wizard, and if I train hard, will be a low ranking Sorcerer by the time I graduate from Hogwarts. I have never felt more alive or seen things more clearly than after having those blocks taken off my core."

"I for one am glad Harry found those spells in his family glamor. I would hate to think where I would be if I had to go through life as weak as I was. Now, I can train and do my duty when it is my turn to head the house of Longbottom."

Madam Longbottom looked up at Neville, and for the first time in her life saw something more then a reminder of Frank and Alice lying in the long-term care unit of St. Mungo's.

Turning to Harry, she spoke in a shaky voice. "It would appear that I not only owe you an apology, but my gratitude as well Lord Potter. Please accept the apology of an old witch who is far to set in her ways for her own good."

"I gladly accept your apology Madam Longbottom, and pledge to you and Neville my support and protection as long as I can give it."

End Flashback

Yes, this year was going to be a great year as long as Neville had Harry by his side.

Susan Bones – From wall flower to Heir of Hufflepuff.

Susan was enjoying her trip back to Hogwarts inside Harry's trunk. Right now, she and Neville were at one of the training stations

brushing up on some of the spells they had learned, and practicing their accuracy with some of the targets. From Susan's point of view, these last three months couldn't have been more life changing.

She had always just viewed herself as a war orphan, living with a kind, but very busy aunt.

That all started to change when she met Harry Potter and more shockingly, Neville Longbottom on the first train ride to Hogwarts.

Susan remember her Aunt telling her that The-boy-who-lived would be in the same class as she was, and that she should look for him, and try to get to know him – Who knows, she might even come to like him. Susan always blushed when she thought of her Aunt teasing her about that. But it also made her a little mad, like her Aunt was trying to run her life. Besides, wouldn't Mr. Potter have enough girls hanging around him? He was the most famous eleven-year-old in the magical world now, wasn't he?

She had been surprised with the way she and Neville hit things off. He looked so lost that first time on the train when he was looking for his toad, Trevor. She couldn't help herself in wanting to go out and look for it with him.

That was how she met Harry.

Opening the compartment door where three first-year students were sitting, and wondered if she had missed a memo somewhere, I mean, here she was looking for a toad, and here was another first-year with a pet rat! What were these people thinking?

Harry had asked her to go a bring Neville back, which she did quickly, only to be pushed aside by Draco Malfoy and his two thugs.

She thought about what had happened next where Draco allegedly tries to use a liquid version of the Imperius Curse on Harry, and ended up getting on Crabbe and Goyle instead.

She felt a little strange sitting there next to Neville when Harry called him his 'god-brother'. Of course, she knew all about his parents and how they had been driven insane by the Lestrangle's, but to see his reaction was... unique.

She felt like she was invading on a private conversation between Harry and Neville, and felt honored just to be there and hear it for herself.

When Harry mentioned the 'binds' that were on all of the magically-raised children, and asked if they wanted them off, there was no hesitation on her part. 'YES' she wanted it off! But when his ask for a magically binding oath that they would not disclose his secrets, she got a little concerned. Eventually she decided to give Harry her oath, and was brought into the wonderful world of Chamber 8, where she could read, study, and work to improve herself and her magic. That was just before her first 'day' at Hogwarts. The night Sirius Black was released from Azkaban.

She couldn't believe it when that 'rat' turned into an ugly round-faced man. She knew it was serious when she saw 'Mad-eye' Moody and Lord Ogden in the Headmaster's office along with her Aunt. She knew most of the history behind the attack on the Potters, but to hear that Sirius Black was not their secret-keeper meant that in all probability, he was innocent! She, with Neville, Ron and Hermione were taken back to their common rooms before everything came to a conclusion, but the next morning there was a special edition of The Prophet declaring to all the wizarding world that Sirius Black was innocent, and was now a free man.

The time a school had been great. She, Neville, Hermione and Harry were all at the top of their classes in scholastic and power. A fifth person, Ron Weasley, was there most of the time as well, but he didn't seem to want to work as hard at getting the work done as the rest. He was still in the upper third of their year, but there was so much more he could do if he would just quit arguing with Hermione and get to work!

It seemed like Harry was always full of surprises. Like when he asked her to get in touch with her Aunt for something he had found out at Gringotts. She was totally blown away when the Head of the Goblin Nation told her that she was the heir of Helga Hufflepuff! She had heard rumors about the chalice of Hufflepuff and how it would change into a horn-of-plenty or cornucopia during times of great need. But to see it in front of her was another thing all together!

Now Harry had offered to have Helga's greenhouse re-built – it was all too much to take in!

While she was friends with Harry, she started to have some deeper feelings for Neville.

He was a lot like her. An orphan from the last war, living with an overprotective grandmother, with limited exposure to the rest of the magical world.

Neville had been sorted into the same house as her, and she could see with the encouragement and training he was getting from Harry that he was a great 'Puff. It didn't hurt that he was also outstanding at Herbology either, probable even a little better than her if she were honest with herself.

Her time at home had been very enjoyable. Neville was able to get her and her Aunt invited over to Madam Longbottom's Boxing Day High Tea. This was considered one of the high points for a lot of the old families.

By herself, Madam Longbottom may not have been very important, but her connection within the 'Daughters of the Goblin Wars' would give just about anyone access to the 'real' power in the magical realm in Great Britain.

Susan had been told by Neville that this year would be a very private affair since Gran wanted to talk to Harry and his guardian alone.

Aunt Amelia was more than a little pleased in Susan being invited to Madam Longbottom's function. It was almost as if Madam Longbottom still held a grudge against Amelia for not getting to Frank and Alice's aid in time to prevent them from the current situation.

Susan had enjoyed being with Neville, even briefly over the holidays. The 'encounter' between the 'Immovable Object' (Madam Longbottom) and the 'Irresistible Force' (Harry) would be something that would be forever imprinted on her mind. Really, Madam Longbottom didn't stand a chance against Harry, but she only had herself to blame.

Aunt Amelia spent most of the evening talking to Sirius Black. It would appear that he had been an Auror before being sent to Azkaban. She had been a few years ahead of Sirius in the Academy.

To Susan, it looked a lot like two old friends catching on old time, but there was something in the way her Aunt was looking at the newly released Lord that said, maybe things are going to get a little more interesting around here.

Her Aunt was very pleased with Susan's development (magical) over the first three months of the school year. When she tested Susan to see just how it was going she was shocked to see that her rating was almost 1300!

"What have you been doing at that school Susan?" Aunt Amelia asked. "When you left here you were at 220 and now you're almost at 1300!"

Susan was almost embarrassed to answer.

"Well, you know about Harry removing the bind on my core on the way to Hogwarts? All I can say is that there are some other... things... that Harry has that help us use our core more and help it grow and expand."

"Is it something that you can tell me?"

"I'm sorry Aunt Amelia, no."

"Oh, well then, how many other is young Lord Potter helping then?"

"Me and three others. Neville, a pure-blood named Ron Weasley, and a muggle-born by the name of Hermione Granger."

"Ah, I see now. How are things going with young Lord Longbottom these days?" Amelia loved teasing Susan about her infatuation with Frank and Alice's son and heir.

Blushing, Susan simply replied, "You'll just have to wait and see on Boxing Day."

Talking a rest at her training station, Susan looked down at her wand, then up at the dummy targets and thought, 'I wonder what the next three months will bring'.

Sirius From Prisoner to Lord over the House of Black

Sirius had just finished seeing Harry off to Hogwarts on the Hogwarts Express and took a few minutes to think about how much his life had changed since hearing the name 'Harry Potter' again three years ago.

He had been considered the 'right-hand of Voldemort' when he was thrown into Azkaban without a trial. He felt so stupid having Peter of all people get the drop on him and make it seem that he was the one who had betrayed James and Lily.

It really didn't surprise him that the jailers and warden at Azkaban felt that he had 'earned' the rights to the cell next to the Dementor's keep. James had been a well-respected Auror, and Lily seemed to be loved by everyone she met. Most of the Aurors on staff had had a chance to meet and greet (pinch the cheeks of) young Harry at one time or another. Almost without exception they felt he (Harry) was the best of both parents, so having the 'opportunity' to punish the one who took his parents away was too good to pass up.

Ever since he had been visited by 'Mad-eye' Moody and having the 'Thea' protocol symbol placed on his cell door Sirius thought that the end was at hand. Either the Ministry was going to come and give him the Dementor's kiss any day, or they were just going to forget about him and let him die of boredom and old age. But every day Simons would come by with food and medicine to help him heal. It was nice to have someone to talk to for just a few moments each day.

Every day Sirius would ask Simons if there was any news regarding Harry, and everyday all Simons would say was that he was unable to say anything with regards to young Master Harry.

Looking back, he should have realized that Simons knew who Harry was, and how he was doing, but he had to keep the secrets of his Head-of-House and master. Now if he would have thought to ask about Lord Ravenclaw...

Sirius still wondered if part of it was a dream when Simons told him to get ready – he would be leaving Azkaban tonight. How was he to leave? It was well past nightfall, and the transport barge only made one, two trips across the channel per day, there was no way he would be leaving this rock anytime soon.

The next thing he knew, a lad, looking very much like his best friend James Potter was standing there talking to him. He still remembered the shock he felt when he realized that young Harry was standing in front of him... He thought for sure he had lost his mind at that point. How had Harry gotten out here? Maybe he really was as strong as ol' 'Mad-eye' had said. How did he put it? '... we will get ya out. Either that, or your godson Harry is going ta come out here and take this place down stone by stone until he finds ya.'

Maybe Harry had had to take the prison apart to find him. All he knew was that one moment he was in Azkaban and the next he was standing in the Headmaster's office at Hogwarts, a whirl-wind meeting with the goblins, and then home to Remus' new pad.

It seemed like there was a disturbance out in the hallway between the Headmaster's office and the meeting with the Goblins. Until he had Remus show it to him, he wasn't even aware what Severus had try to do, or what Harry did in response. It still made him smile seeing Snivellus slam into the brick wall that appeared out of nowhere.

He had tried to get back into the swing of things, but the guilt he felt from letting Harry down was almost worse then being in prison. It took a lot of work talking with Remus, Min, and Prof. Flitwick before he even started feeling better.

Unfortunately, during that time he had found how to escape all his troubles in a bottle of Ogden's Finest Fire-Whiskey.

It wasn't until the Boxing Day High Tea at the Longbottom's that he found a reason to climb out of the bottle and stay out.

Amelia Bones was also present with her young ward, Susan, who seemed to 'have feelings' for the young Lord Longbottom.

Amelia had been a few years ahead of him at Hogwarts and the Academy and was known as a fair, hard working 'Puff. To her credit, she had climb up the ranks through hard work and detention to detail. Her husband was one of the first casualties in the first war making sure that children from an orphanage had time to get out before one of Voldemort's first attacks. It looked like since that time she hadn't had time to look for anyone else since she had Susan to

look after. It didn't hurt that Amelia always did know how to take care of herself as well.

Who knows, maybe Harry, Neville, and Susan can plan some other get-to-gathers as the years roll by...

Professor Dumbledore – Leader of the light to Gringotts Outcast

For the first time in many years, Professor Dumbledore found himself at a loss.

After many years, Harry Potter had come to Hogwarts. He gave new meaning to Sir Winston Churchill's saying '...a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma'.

Just who was this Harry Potter?

Not all of his dealing with young Mr. Potter had been what he would call 'pleasant'.

From the time he met young Harry at Gringotts; to being present when he removed the wards around his former home on Privet Drive; to having been 'encouraged' to return the founders items; this person 'Harry Potter' had been one person he could not seem to be able to control.

A point in fact was that after three years he was still on probation at Gringotts.

Was he powerful? Yes, without question.

Was he intelligent? Yes, only Ms. Granger seemed to be his equal among the first year students – though he thought Mr. Potter was hiding his true potential.

Was he dedicated to the side of Light? That was yet to be seen. Dumbledore knew that as long as Harry was worthy to hold Durendal he would not be evil. However, he had already seen Durendal reject him once after bringing down the blood wards at Privet Drive... Might that not happen again?

A/N I was going to include more people, but feel that you have been more than patient with me in getting this 'make-up' chapter out.

To give you a quick look at what the others were thinking about:

Remus

Harry's caretaker. Loved to see him grow and learn. Teaches him how to balance hard work, and having fun.

Professor McGonagall

Guardian of Harry, friend to Lupin. Tells him many stories regarding his parents. Feel that Harry is as close to a grandson that she will ever have.

Professor Flitwick

Teaches Harry about the wizarding world

Professor Snape

Unable to understand the little brat.

Draco

Still thinks he's the top of the heap – too bad it's a dung heap. He doesn't have a clue with what would happen if he were to attack Harry or one of his friends. Relies completely on his father to instill fear in his fellow Slytherin.

Essences of Lily - Chapter 28 – Duel at Hogwarts.

After waking up from a well deserved rest, Harry was pulled aside by Ron and Susan.

"Harry?" Susan began, "I talked to my Aunt about that 'special building project' you had mentioned a while back, and we both think it would be great if you could build or maybe I should say rebuild the Greenhouse for us."

"Ya Harry, Dad says that if you knew where Godric's chamber is, it might help me and Percy with our 'little' problems. Though I think the twins are more interested in learning the finer points of pranking from one of the founders than anything else."

"Sue, I'll send my house elf construction manager, Ty, to talk with you and your aunt. And Ron, I don't know where Godric's chamber is exactly, but if it's anything like Roe's and Sal's, only an heir can enter it – or maybe someone they find worthy and invite in. Let me know when you and your brothers can all get together and I have Ty or Sassy take you to it. But if it's anything like the other founders chambers, there will probably be a test or trial before you can get in."

"Sue, we may also have to do something with the Headmaster before we build the greenhouse. It would probably raise too many questions if a building that size just 'showed up' one day."

"Well, since the other chambers are hidden, the greenhouse will be hidden also."

"You may be correct, why don't we ask Ty now before we get to Hogwarts? Ty?"

The small excited elf appeared in front of the group. "Yes Master Harry. Is there something you want?"

"Ty, This is Lady Susan Bone, heiress of Hufflepuff, and Mr. Ronald Weasley, one of the heirs of Gryffindor." Ty bowed low to both young students.

"Susan had a question regarding Hufflepuff's greenhouse and chamber. Do you know if the general population can see the

greenhouse or is it hidden from view like the other founders chambers?"

The next few hours were spent talking with Susan and Ron regarding the founder's chambers and when they could be built / taken to them. They ended with Ron saying he would get with his brothers and get back to Harry as to a time when they could be shown Gryffindor's chambers.

After spending a few more 'days' training in chamber eight of Harry's trunk, everyone exited so they could get ready for the return to Hogwarts.

Arriving back at Hogwarts Harry was in a hurry to get through the wards of Hogwarts before any of the students made it to the Great Hall. Harry had set up a prank before leaving that would take affect as they entered the castle, but first he had to let Lady Hogwarts know to get things started.

As the students got out of the carriages, they felt compelled to just stand in the entrance hall in small groups, moving in a little deeper as more students came. After the last student had been dropped off, they hear music start to play...

It after midnight
something evil's lurkin' in the dark
Under the moonlight
You see a sight that almost stops your heart
You try to scream
But terror takes the sound before you made it
You start to freeze
As horror looks you right between eyes
You're paralyzed

'Cause this is thriller...

(A/N Michael Jackson's 14 min. rendition of 'Thriller' View it on Youtube or Vevo)

As the music started to play, Draco Malfoy comes to the front of the student to lead them in, while they get into straight rows of boy / girl behind him and turned to face the door to the Great Hall.

The music continued with the bass pounding out. In unison, the entire student body started moving together. Stepping, clapping, spinning, flipping, swaying from side to side and twirling as one unit as they entered the Great Hall. The Headmaster and others at the head-table looked up to see what the disturbance was when they noticed everyone dancing in unison. The voice of Vincent Price raps:

Darkness falls across the land
The midnight hour is close at hand
Creatures crawl in search of blood
To terrorize y'all's neighborhood
And whosoever shall be found
Without the soul for getting down
Must stand and face the hounds of hell
And rot inside a corpse's shell

The foulest stench is in the air
The funk of forty thousand years
And grizzly ghouls from every tomb
Are closing in to seal your doom
And though you fight to stay alive
Your body starts to shiver
For no mere mortal can resist
The evil of the thriller

As the music continued, the students broke into tight patterns, each student heading to their own table, crisscrossing with each other with perfect precision and timing. On the enchanted ceiling, the words to the song scroll by like a large karaoke machine.

As the last chord of the song ended, the students were all in position, and sat down together. The muggle-born and those raised with some exposure to the muggle world started applauding and whistling. The pure-bloods and most of the professors had a very different look on their faces.

Draco and his crew looked as if they wanted to go a scrub the 'muggle contaminants' off themselves. But if you looked closely, there were one or two that had actually enjoyed it.

Professor Dumbledore stood up to start the back-to-school feast. Most of the students are still cheering when he pulled out his wand

to cast a 'shotgun' blast, but before he could, someone, or something else did it for him.

The enchanted ceiling of the Great Hall flashed brightly causing everyone present to cover their eyes for but a moment. Everyone looked up just in time to see the lyrics of the song scroll past. Following the song came, for some, a disturbing message:

"MESSRS. PADFOOT AND MOONY WOULD LIKE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO MR. KEEPER, KEEPING ALIVE THE TRADITION OF THE MARAUDERS AT HOGWARTS. IT IS HOPED THAT MS. KITTY AND MR. BUMBLE WILL BE KIND TO MR. KEEPER AND THAT SNIVELLIS SHOULD MIND HIS OWN BUSINESS. REMEMBER, LIFE IS MADE EASIER WITH LAUGHTER."

The image of a Grim and the Moon showed on the ceiling, followed by what looked like the three goal post from the quidditch field slowly fading from view to reveal the night sky outside.

Both Professors Dumbledore and McGonagall were trying hard to keep a straight face, while Professor Snape was staring daggers in Harry's direction.

Another 'flash /bang' and all of the professor's robes where changed to different styles.

Professor Dumbledore wore a psychedelic tie-die robe that looked like it belonged at Woodstock.

Professor McGonagall's robes were new cut in an early Victorian style.

Professor Flitwick's robe made him look like a leprechaun, but the most drastic change was Professor Snape. His robe was now pure white, to match his now pure white hair. The other professors at the head-table were trying their best (and failing) to not snicker at portion master's new cloths.

Looking at his robe, a tinge of pink rose to his normal pale checks. Jumping up, he moved quickly to the Gryffindor table to confront his prankster. As he moved, his robe (and hair) started changing through the colors of the rainbow.

MR. POTTER! 100 POINTS FROM GRYFFINDOR, DETENTION WITH ME FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR, A LIFETIME BAN FROM PLAYING QUIDDITCH, AND CHANGE MY ROBE'S AND HAIR BACK THIS INSTANT!

"Can he do that?" Fred asked.

"I think it's a little out of his scope," replied George.

"Shut up you two or I give you the same punishment!"

"But Professor Snape, how could it be me? I was in the middle of the group as we came in, and besides, I'm not a keeper, I'm a seeker."

"I don't care if you were dancing a jig on the moon! I know it was you and those two juvenile delinquents that used to tag along with your worthless father! You will change my robes and hair back now or you will face my wrath!" Snape's finished with his big hooked nose in Harry's face.

Leave it to Snape to kill the mood.

By this point in time both Professors Dumbledore, McGonagall and the other heads of house were also at the Gryffindor table just in time to hear Snape's challenge.

"Severus, it would not be wise to talk to a student in that manner. The consequences could be most severe."

"I have put up with those morons longer than anyone else Headmaster. I refuse to let this spoiled, pampered, lazy, poor excuse of a worm, let alone a wizard, think he can intimidate or prank me and get away with it! I am not a small boy anymore! I will be shown the respect I deserve! Especially from a Potter!"

The entire Hall was quite to the point that it didn't seem as if anyone was even breathing. Harry had been getting more, and more upset the more Snape was speaking.

"What did you say Snivellus?" Oh, this was a bad sign. Harry's voice was just over a whisper but everyone in the Hall could hear him clearly.

"Did you insult my father and my family? Did you call my father worthless, and me a spoiled, pampered, lazy, poor excuse of a worm?" The air around Harry and the professors was getting thick with unleashed magic. If someone would have looked at the ceiling they would have also seen the stars start to disappear, and the lights in the Hall dim.

"Severus Snape of the House of Prince," (Snape's growled at Harry for revealing his family house) "I, Harry James Potter, Head of the Ancient and Noble House of Potter declare a feud between our two houses. You have questioned my family's honor and integrity, insulted my family's name and have spoken slanderous remarks in the presents of the wizarding public and myself. Do you wish to withdraw your comments in my presence and in the presence of the wizarding world?" To all those around Harry, the aura of his power was clearly visible, but to Severus Snape, all he saw was a first year who thought he could take him on.

"No... Now, what do you plan to do about it little man?"

"You have stated that I should change your robes and hair or face your wrath. To me, you have issued a challenge, and I accept!"

"Harry, no!"

"As the challenged, I have the chose of weapons, time and location. The time? Now. The location? The Quidditch field. The weapon?" Here Harry had to be very careful. He knew he was powerful, but so was Snape. And he has a lot more years dueling than Harry. There was only one weapon Harry had practiced with enough that he felt he had a chance against the man. "Broadswords until an opponent yields or draws first blood."

Snape's laughed. "Can you even pick up a broadsword little man?"

"Harry, Severus, stop! I forbid it!" Dumbledore was trying to establish control again over the situation.

"I am sorry Headmaster, but according to the olde laws, such a slanderous statement cannot be allowed to stand. This shallow man has slandered my families name for the last time. When this is over, I will be withdrawing from his class, and hiring a private tutor for potions, and will invite anyone else who wants to join me."

Harry turned to his friends who had come to support him.

"Lady Bones, may I ask for you to contact your guardian to provide the proper paperwork for this duel?"

"Lord Longbottom, could you please contact your guardian also since I intend to have you act as my second tonight?"

"Professor Flitwick, may I ask you to referee this event, seeing how you are a world renowned dueling champion?"

"Is there anything I can do to talk you out of this foolish venture Harry? It's dark outside in the middle of the winter. Surly this can wait for another time?" Dumbledore asked.

"No. The house elves can bring torches to light the field, and I'm sure Professor Flitwick is intelligent enough to fashion a proper dueling platform with a warming charm on it. Just have Madame Pomfrey ready to patch up the loser. I wouldn't want you to loose a potion master due to loss of blood, and Headmaster, I have told you time, and time again, to you, I am Lord Potter."

"As for the rest of you, it will probably take two hours before Madame Bones can get here with the paperwork. Enjoy your feast while you can. I have things to prepare."

As Harry turned to leave, he came close to Professor McGonagall and whispered to her very quietly. "Please see if you can get Remus and Sirius here. This is as much for them as it is me and my family." Upon seeing an almost undetectable nod, he left the Hall, heading to 'Room of Knowledge'.

Upon reaching Hogwarts in the astral plane, he was met with a variety of reactions. Durendal let Harry know that he was walking a very fine line between personal vendetta and fulfilling the duty of a Paladin by challenging the bully in such a fashion.

'Ma' was mad. Not at Harry, but at Severus for his closed minded, totally unfounded tirade against her husband and Harry. She wanted nothing more than to have Harry humiliate him in front of all the faculty and students there.

Lady Hogwarts was saddened that the conflict had gotten to this point, but knew this was a cancer that needed to be removed from Hogwarts for a long time.

Godric Gryffindor was excited to be able to teach Harry some of the techniques that Durendal may have overlooked. Actually, he just wanted to spar with Harry to gauge how good he was with a sword.

Of all the founders, Salazar was the most reserved. He knew just how big this challenge was. Harry had to fight a much older, more trained opponent, win, and start to win the respect of his house. It really didn't matter if Severus 'saved face' or not, but it was absolutely vital that Harry win the duel – even if he had to cheat.

Harry, Durendal, and Godric found a dueling platform to use, and for the next several hours (astral time – earth time, just a few minutes) they reviewed all he had learned as a Page, Squire, and Knight under Durendal at 'Potter in the Mind'. Godric found very little that he could add, so he spent most of his time dueling with Harry, presenting different attacks and defenses, instructing him in how to know what your opponent was about to do by the way they held their sword, the positioning of their feet, or how they had their weight distributed. All of these observations constituted the dueler's 'tell'. If you knew what your opponent was going to do before they did, you had a distinct advantage.

Later, Salazar came to Harry and asked him to go for another walk with him.

"Do you know what you will do tonight Harry?"

"I'm going to carve me a 'bat' for the welcome feast that I missed."

"Don't get cheeky with me young man. You are still my heir and represent me and my interests at Hogwarts. Though it was quite Slytherin how you were able to dictate the conditions of this contest to your advantage. This could be a very large step in showing some of the members of my house that they are not on the right path, but

you must be careful. I have watched Severus for many years here in the astral plane. He will not accept defeat easily or well. You can almost count on him trying to bull-rush you, knock you down, smash your glasses, and hitting you before he tries to draw first blood. In short inflict as much pain as he can."

"If by some miracle you manage to win the duel, do not expect him to accept the outcome. Be prepared to guard your back, as he is sure to want to have vengeance on you for his loss of face before the entire school."

"If he chooses a second, you can be sure it will be someone who has no moral character and will also try to strike you as quickly and brutally as possible. What is it that that one Auror says? 'Constant Vigilance!' . Until you are back at the school, and the threats have been removed, you must always be looking over your shoulder."

"Now, your one main advantage is that Snape will probably underestimate your abilities. That can work to your advantage, however, do not get sloppy by pretending you have no talent. Address his attacks, use a strong defense, and then draw that blood as quickly as you can and get out of there!"

"I think you've made your point Uncle, I will."

Salazar left Harry to clear his mind and prepare himself for the upcoming duel.

A short time later Lady Hogwarts found him, and gave her opinion of the situation.

"You know Harry, this has only happened twice before in the last thousand years, and both times the teacher was victorious. I do not want that trend to continue. I need my defender to start taking care of the evil that is present here. Professor Snape is the lesser of two major evils that are currently here. You must be careful that you do not reveal too much to the greater evil that currently resides on Quirinus' soul."

Stopping in front of Harry, Lady Hogwarts took his face in one of her hands, gently stroking his cheek. Moving forward, she surprised him by leaning forward and giving him a chaste kiss on his lips. "Win for me my champion." and she was gone.

Harry found himself back in Rowena's private room. He could still feel the touch of her kiss on his lip. It filled his whole soul with a type of love he had never felt before. He would win. There was no question of that. He would not let his Lady down.

Harry called Sassy to bring him his dueling robes, and slid to the Quidditch team's locker room to finish getting ready.

Elsewhere in the Castle.

"I must insist you stop this foolishness Severus. You do not know the danger you are in or the danger you are placing others in. You MUST call off this duel!"

Severus Snape was enjoying the foolish ranting of the Headmaster. What could this little snot nosed brat do to him that he would want to call off this duel? After more than ten years he was finally going to get some payback for all the humiliation he had to suffer at the hands of those four delinquents. All of that payback was going to come out of the hide of one Harry James Potter.

It was only fitting that he should get his pound of flesh from the son of the thief that stole his only love. Of course, losing Lily wasn't his fault. It was all Potter's, and today he was going to extract his revenge.

"You do not understand Severus. Harry is not a novice with a sword. He has had one since he was eight years old and I have personally witnessed what he can do with that sword! The sword is called Durendal, the same sword that Charlemagne gave to Prince Roland, Chief of the Paladins!"

"Oh, please Headmaster! Are you trying to tell me that that little twerp has some magical, mystical sword that hasn't been seen for over a thousand years! Knowing James, he probably got it in a brothel down Knockturn Alley and Harry found it in one of his old trunks."

"No Severus, you don't understand. I have seen Harry destroy Blood-rune stone with one swing of the sword and come out unscathed. It really is the sword of Roland!" He didn't want to tell him

how Harry used it to judge him at Gringotts and what that had cost him.

"If Harry is still worthy to hold the sword, you MUST withdraw your challenge. I do not know Durendal will do to you."

"You're wasting your time Headmaster. The little worm has accepted my challenge, and since he has asked for a second, I have contacted Lucius so that Draco can be mine. IF by some stroke of luck Potter draws first blood, Draco will make short work of what ever remains of him. I have seen how Lucius has pushed the boy over the holidays. I think you would be quite impressed with his skills. It almost makes me sad that we no longer teach sword fighting in the school."

Dumbledore saw that he was not going to change his potion master's mind. His only other hope was to try to find Harry and talk him out of it, but he knew going in that Harry's mind was already made up.

Professor McGonagall was successful in not only contacting Remus and Sirius, but also Ragnok, Griphook and Stonehand.

"So what exactly is going on Min? What's this about Snivellus challenging Harry?" Sirius asked as soon as he reached Hogwarts.

"Severus seems to have taken exception to a little prank that was pulled on the school at the beginning of the welcome back feast. You two didn't have anything to do with it did you?" She asked.

"While I can't confirm or deny if Harry is a Marauder, I can say that whatever happened had nothing to do with us." Remus responded. "Tell us what happened."

Professor McGonagall shared what had happened to both the old Marauders and the guests from Gringotts.

"We're going to have to ask for a pensive memory of that dance routine. It sounds like it was quite involved."

"Oh, it was. It wasn't until the message from the 'old Marauders' introducing the next generation and having our robe changed that things got out of hand. I really think that Severus just snapped. The

thought of seven more years of pranks and practical jokes must have been the straw that broke the camel's back."

"Did his high and greasiness ever think that he was not the only one being pranked? It sounds like it was more of a 'get everyone involved if you want to or not' kind of prank. It's not like the old days where James and I would target him specifically now is it?"

"No, but he could have left that comment about Snivellus minding his own business off of his message."

"Now Min, You're still assuming that this is Harry pulling the prank. What about those Weasley twins? I've heard their prime Marauder material."

Professor McGonagall looked over her glasses to Remus with a look that stated 'Just how dumb do you think I am' written all over it.

"Yes, while it may have been one or both of the twin's, I don't think they have what it takes to be Marauders. For one, they don't have an animagus ..." Professor McGonagall looked very coldly at Remus. "Remus, don't tell me you've been teaching Harry how to become an animagus have you?"

"Teaching? No, not me." Remus responded without looking in his old professor's eyes.

"Oh, good heavens! Harry Potter, a first year and already an animagus! What is his form Remus?"

"That's just it Min, Harry doesn't have 'A' form."

Technically that was true. He had FOUR forms – so far. Professor McGonagall must have heard Remus' stress the 'A' part of his reply. She found that she suddenly needed to sit down.

"Harry Potter has more than one animagus form? How many? What are they?"

"Now Min, you know that's not for us to say – even if it is true. You'll just have to get Harry aside and see if he trusts you enough to share this with you."

All this time, the goblins were watching the interaction between the other witches and wizards, making mental notes as to the talents, skill and taking bets on the animagus forms of one of their favorite subjects – Harry Potter.

"Look, all of this can be discussed at a later time. Let's get back to the duel. Remus, just how good is Harry with a blade?" Sirius asked.

"All I can tell you is that I wouldn't want to be on the dueling stage with him. I haven't been able to beat him for about the last three months before he went to Hogwarts. It doesn't matter if we're using wooden swords, or real blades, if Harry wants to he can end a duel any time he wants."

Stonehand spoke up for the first time after hearing that. "We goblins pride ourselves on our skill with a blade. I would be very interested in seeing how our young Paladin handles himself should he survive the night. Of course, with your permission my Liege." Referring to Ragnok.

"Yes, I think that would be a very interesting demonstration. We will see if young Lord Potter would be willing to participate in something like that. It may prove very... enlightening."

'Harry,' 'Ma' said. 'Both Madame Bones and Longbottom are in the annex off the Great Hall and wish to meet you.'

'Thanks 'Ma'. How did you know that?'

'Lady Hogwarts let me know. It really is nice to have another woman to talk to.'

Harry blushed at the thought of the last time he had seen Lady Hogwarts.

'Yes, we'll talk about that later son.' 'Ma' said, picking up on his thoughts.

Harry slid to a dark alcove near the annex, made sure there was no one around, walked over and knocked on the door. When it was open, he was met with the stern stare of two of the most formidable women in the wizarding world. Madame Bones was the first to address him.

"Lord Potter, I understand you have been challenged by one Severus Snape to a duel of honor until one or the other combatants yields or draws first blood. Is that correct?"

"Yes Madame Bones that is correct, and I want it clearly stated that it is swords only, no wands or other weapons will be allowed. If you wish, I will provide a pensive memory of the insult that preceded this unfortunate event."

"That will not be necessary. Both Lord Longbottom and Lady Bones have offered memories showing the insults made and of your response. It looked like it was a very festive prank as things go until Professor Snape confronted you. Now, I understand you have ask Lord Longbottom to be your second in this matter."

Harry faced Lady Longbottom, but addressed Madame Bones. "Yes, that is correct. I have been reminded over the holidays that a Longbottom always stands by a Potter, and visa-verse. I will do everything in my power to see that his services are not needed, however, I feel honored that he feels he can stand by me in this challenge."

Lady Longbottom responded, "Lord Potter, I am sure you would have no shortage of people who would stand as your second against that vile excuse of a person. You honor me and Neville in your request, and even though I would rather not have him on the platform, I will agree to let him participate." With that, she signed the required forms.

Harry bowed his head to Lady Longbottom as a show of respect. Turning back to Madame Bones he asked, "Has my challenger requested a second as well?"

"Strangly enough, yes. He as requested young Draco Malfoy to stand as his second. Lord Malfoy was just in here signing the required form so that he can participate."

"Now, so that there is no misunderstanding. This a duel of honor until a combatant yields or draws first blood. This is NOT a duel to the death. When first blood is drawn, the combatants are to stop and withdraw to their original starting positions so no further harm is done. If the second wishes to continue, he is to wait until he is called

and the contest will continue at the discretion of the judge. In this case Professor Flitwick. Is that clear to you Lord Potter?"

"Perfectly clear Madame Bones. Lady Longbottom? If I should fail in my quest to draw first blood from my opponent, I want Neville to yield. I don't want him getting hurt on my account. He is there for moral support, not to fight my battles."

"I understand Lord Potter. I will let him know what you wish. Thank you."

Harry sign where Madame Bones indicated and went out to talk to Neville before the duel.

Despite the lateness of the hour, or the coldness of the weather, the entire school made their way from the castle to the Quidditch field. There they found the field well lit and a splendid dueling platform where all could see.

On the East side of the platform were Harry and Neville. Harry was surprised that Neville had his own dueling robe and sword. He made it clear to Neville that he did not expect him to come in as his second, but that he needed him there since a Longbottom always stands with a Potter.

Neville said he understood, but "It would feel so good getting my hands on that greasy git."

"Remember Neville, he probably has twenty or thirty years experience with a sword. The only reason why I am challenging him with a sword rather than a wand is due to all the time I've spent in my trunk training." He still hadn't told them about having the essences of Durendal in his mind, or his training at 'Potter in the Mind'.

Professor Dumbledore tried one last time to talk Harry and Severus out of the duel, but neither would budge. Now it was a matter of honor, and neither were willing to lose face by backing out at the last minuet.

The combatants and their seconds approached the center of the platform and faced Professor Flitwick.

"This is a duel of honor until one of the combatants yields, or first blood is drawn and it is to be swords only. Do both combatants understand the rules of the contest?"

"Yes." Both men replied.

"Please place your wands on the table in front of you."

Professor Snape and Draco were both hesitant to place their wands on the table. Harry and Neville did so without batting an eye.

"I must ask one last time if either of you wish to withdraw from the contest?"

"No." Came the unanimous response.

"Then turn and face each other. Bow." Snape and Draco barely moved his head. "Seconds return to your marks and combatants move to the center and wait for my signal."

Draco and Neville moved to the end of the platform while Harry and Snape stood in the center of the form facing each other.

Snape sneered at Harry, "Couldn't you find a sword small enough to fit you little man?"

Harry held out his right hand as Durendal appeared in it, the blade surrounded by a dark black flame with flex of green in it. The students and faculty gasped when they saw the sword.

"It would appear that you have be judged and found to be dark by Durendal, sword of Prince Roland, now the sword of Lord Potter."

Another gasp went up as the people heard Harry's declaration.

"Oh please Potter." Severus moaned. "A cheap trick to draw even more attention to yourself? Just how pathetic are you? Never mind, don't answer that. We all know the answer to that now don't we? You're even more worthless than your DEAD father." Most of Slytherin House laughed at that while the rest of the student body just looked in shock at the young man before them.

"Lord Potter, are you ready?"

Harry nodded his head.

"Professor Snape, are you ready?"

He also nodded his head with a sick smirk on his face.

"Combatants En Garde! Begin!" Professor Flitwick called out.

(A/N if you want to see a good sword fight, go to Youtube and look up 'sword fight princess bride', 'Inigo Montoya vs the Dread Pirate Roberts' or 'three musketeers'. They will provide a much better fight scene than this)

Both men came out to the center of the platform with their swords at the ready. When they were about three feet away from each other, Snape did just what Salazar said he would do, he started running at Harry at full speed with his sword raised above his head.

"AHHHHHHHH..." Snape yelled trying to unnerve Harry and catch him off guard.

As he came towards Harry, he swung his sword in such a way as to deliver a fatal blow, Harry stepped to his right and stuck out his foot.

Snape's was surprised by the sudden move by Harry and soon found himself kissing the hard platform floor with his face. Harry, for his part, walked down the platform, and turned with his guard up waiting for the Professor's next move.

To say that Professor Snape was mad would be an understatement. That little twerp had tripped him and made him look foolish in front of the entire school. Getting up quickly, he checked himself to make sure no blood was coming out of his nose. Turning to face Potter again, he was enraged to see that Harry was facing him in a standard dueling stance. 'Well, if the little twerp wants to play with the big-boys, lets see just what he knows.'

Closing the distance, Harry and Professor Snape began testing one another's defenses and range. Harry chose to defend against Snape's attack since he did not want to give up too much information to Snape or anyone else that day.

Snape came at Harry hard with multiple overhead strikes coming from the left, then right and back again. Harry parried and blocked each strike and moved easily out of the Professor's strike zone.

Snape thought that he could lull Harry into a false sense of security by repeating his overhead strikes, sometimes doubling up on the side he was striking from, when he suddenly changed tactics and went for a thrust straight through Harry's heart. The only problem, when he thrust, Harry wasn't there any more. He just stepped to the side, and grabbed the Professor's over-extended hand, and pulled him down again. This time, however, Harry didn't cross the platform to get ready for the next pass. He calmly stepped over the downed Professor, and with his left foot, stood on the right arm that held the sword to where Snape couldn't move.

Pointing his own sword between Snape's eyes he asked, "Do you yield?"

Snape's whole face went as red as any Weasley's hair. "NEVER!" came the reply.

With a simple arch, Harry used Durendal to cut a small 'C' (for coward) into the cheek of Professor Snape – drawing first blood.

"HOLD!" Professor Flitwick called. "This contest is concluded. Lord Potter, return to your line while Professor Snape is looked at for medical attention."

From the far side of the platform, Draco started at Harry on a dead run. Harry withdrew his foot from the Professor's arm and proceeded to move back to his side of the platform. He knew what was coming next. Salazar had warned him how the Professor would react should he lose the match.

As soon as Harry turned his back to the Snape, he heard him get up quickly and begin his charge towards him.

"DIE POTTER SCUM!" the Professor yelled out.

Harry spun on the spot observing the situation. Snape was almost upon him, with Draco a step or so behind. Bringing Durendal up in a slashing motion, catching the Professor's right arm half way between the shoulder and the elbow. Durendal flared as it cut up

through the attacker's arm. Harry took a step to the side, and bringing the sword down, caught Draco's right arm off removing it below the elbow. Both fell to the platform holding their injured appendage.

Harry stepped over to the injured man and asked, "Do you want me to remove the left arm as well while I'm at it?"

Looking at the end of the platform, Harry saw Lord Malfoy starting to rise to come to the aid of his son. Harry's gaze froze him in his stride, and he returned to his seat.

Pandemonium broke out as Madame Bones, her Aurors, the Headmaster, Professor Flitwick, and Madame Pomfrey all converged at Severus' location at once.

There was minimal bleeding as both sides of the cut since they had been cauterized as Durendal moved through the tissue. That meant that the arm could be restored with minimum problem, however, with the tissue cauterized, that also meant that nerve tissue had been destroyed, and that even though he would retain the use of his arm, there would be a loss of motor control, meaning that, for Snape, he may be able to teach potions again (if he ever got out of prison again), he would never have the control required to mix some of the more 'delicate' potions. For Draco, he would not have as fine a motor control in his wand work. He would have to work that much harder to keep up with the rest of the first year's.

Over Professor Dumbledore's protest, Professor Snape was taken to a secure ward at St. Mungo's to have his arm reattached and then taken to a holding cell to stand trial for the attempted murder of the head of an ancient and noble house. While against Harry's protest, Draco was just taken up to the infirmary to have his arm replaced. No charges would be made against Malfoy since he was a minor.

For his part, Harry quickly left the area and tried to stay out of sight. Returning to the Quidditch dressing room, he immediately went to the bathroom and prayed to the porcelain goddess. Maybe it was a good thing he hadn't eaten dinner after all.

After he had cleaned up, and came back out to the dressing room, he found a small hoard of people: Neville and his Gran, Susan with

her aunt, Remus, Sirius, Professor McGonagall, Ragnok, Griphook, and Stonehand.

Harry turned first to Ragnok kneeled, and bowed before him.

"Forgive me my Liege, I did not know you were present. I pray I have not done ill in your sight."

"Rise Lord Potter. You have done no ill for defending your family's honor. Because of your victory, and the cowardly attack by Severus of the House of Prince, you now have claim of half the goods, wealth, and property of that House. We will make up a full reckoning by the time you next our establishment."

"Thank you my Lord, but I have no desire to take of these spoils of conquest. Please extent this gift to my second and loyal friend, Lord Longbottom. He has also been wronged by this man and has as much claim against him as anyone else."

Both Neville and Ragnok were shocked at Harry's decision, but agreed to it.

Stonehand addressed Harry next. "That was an extremely easy win for you out there Lord Potter. I get the impression you were most restrained in your contest with Professor Snape. Perhaps you would be interested in some private training lessons with me. I would love to see exactly what you and that sword of yours can do."

"You honor me Stonehand. I look forward to our exchange."

"Well, if you will excuse us Lord Potter, we have to get back to Gringotts and prepare for the coming day. May your gold always flow, and may your enemies lie in ruins at your feet." With that, the goblins left.

"Harry, mate, thanks! I really don't know what else to say!" Neville was dumbfounded at what Harry had passed on to him.

"Don't thank me yet. You may only get some greasy robes and half-baked potions. What ever it is, you deserve it for being willing to stand by me. I really appreciate it."

"You truly are a noble head-of-house Lord Potter. I am grateful for everything you have done for the House of Longbottom. I'm glad Neville met you on the train." Lady Longbottom had an unshed tear in her eye. This was so typical of the Potter heads in the past. Always looking out for their friends and allies. Coming over to face Harry, she took his face in her old, withered hands and gave him a kiss on the cheek. Then, taking Neville by the arm, exited the dressing room.

Next was Madame Bones' chance to address Harry. "Lord Potter I would like to apologize for not having taken control of the platform sooner as to prevent this attack on your person. This was clearly a personal attack outside the scope or bounds of the duel. I must say you handled yourself very well. You do know you would have been within your rights to have killed him outright when he came after you after the duel don't you?"

"Yes Madame Bones I do. However, I think that may be a little too much to ask an eleven year old boy to do at this time, don't you? I was lucky he didn't run into the end of the sword, but I did not want to see him dead. He just needs to learn that my father has been dead for almost ten years now. I am not my father. I should be judged on my own merits, not someone else's."

"Well said Lord Potter well said."

As Madame Bones was leaving with Susan, Professor Dumbledore came in looking very upset.

"I hope you are satisfied with what you have accomplished today Harry. Not only have you physically injured a member of my staff and a fellow student, but in all likelihood ended the career of one, and made life extremely difficult for the other."

Harry started growling at the Headmaster, but before he could respond, Professor McGonagall beat him to the punch. "Just what is your problem Albus? Harry has done nothing wrong but defend himself, and the honor and integrity of his family. It's not his fault that Severus could not put away the hard feeling he had with James and the rest of them after all these years. As for young Mr. Malfoy, again, Harry defended himself since Mr. Malfoy certainly looked like he was out for Mr. Potter's blood as much as Severus was. It's just too bad that they can not take him in for questioning to find out what

intentions were. And how many times must he tell you that you will address him as Mr. Potter, or Lord Potter!"

"Now if you are quite through with trying to brow-beating Mr. Potter I have some questions for him."

Everyone in the room was surprised with the tone of voice Professor McGonagall had taken with the Headmaster. It was like a lioness looking after her cub. It made Harry feel all warm and comforted inside.

Defeated, the Headmaster headed towards the door only to stop as he was about to leave, and, turning back into the room saying, "We will be discussing this further... Lord Potter." With that he headed out the door.

Harry looked back at Professor McGonagall, grateful that she had stepped in to take care of the Headmaster, but now, he was concerned with what she had to ask him. She conjured soft chairs for them all to sit in and then asked her question.

"Harry... If I can call you Harry?" He nodded his head 'Yes'. "I'm your Aunt Min now, not Professor McGonagall, or the head of Gryffindor House, or even the Deputy Headmistress. Just Aunt Min so you know nothing you say will go any further than this room."

"Please be honest with me. Are you an animagus? Did Remus teach you how to become an animagus?"

Harry was a little shocked and surprised by Aunt Min's questions. In truth, he had started his training before he met Remus or her through his father's journals and notes.

"I will be honest with you Aunt Min. Yes, I am an animagus, but no, I can't say that Remus taught me. I started my training will before meeting any of you through my father's journals and notes. Did he help me or supervise the transformations? Yes. Only because if he hadn't I would have tried doing them anyway, and may have injured myself, or got myself stuck in a form. As it is, I was able to transform without any problems."

"Please don't be made with Uncle Remus. He really had no choice in the matter. Please?"

Sitting back in her chair she slowly rubbed her tired eyes and let out a sigh.

"Will you tell me what your form is Harry?" she asked almost afraid of the answer.

"Form?" Harry replied with a little smirk.

Now Minerva put her head in her hands and just shook back and forth.

"Will you tell... and show me your FORMS, Harry?"

"As long as you promise to keep them secret. I will register ONE of the forms if it becomes public, or upon graduating from Hogwarts. Is that acceptable Aunt Min?"

"Yes Harry, that will be fine. I promise to keep the forms a secret as long as you do not use them to get into trouble!"

"Fine, I can live with that." He then proceeded to show her all the forms that he had managed so far. By then end of the demonstration, she was suitably impressed.

"What you have managed to do is nothing short of amazing! I don't know of one other person alive or dead that has had more than one form! Keep practicing them. You never know when they might come in handy."

"Now, come on, you need to get back up to your room and get to bed. Thanks to your little show tonight no one is going to get much sleep."

End Chapter 28

A/N Thanks to Galezilla for reviewing the chapter. English has always been one of my weak subjects. It's nice to have someone smart in the house. (Now if he'd only help pay for the groceries)

Regarding the Dance sequence. Harry did not use the Imperius Curse to get the people to dance, just a greatly modified version of

the Jelly-leg Curse where the students went through specific steps in sequence.

Rdgale

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